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ABSTRACT

This document, intended for Literacy Volunteers of America tutors, explains how to carry out collaborative small group tutoring. Chapter 1 explains the benefits of small group tutoring and collaborative learning. Chapter 2 tells what factors to consider when forming a small group (e.g., whether there is a desire to be in a small group, the motivation for becoming a group, and the best time and place to meet). Chapter 3 tells how to get the group started and moving toward improving members' literacy skills. Included are a list of tutor and learner responsibilities and a discussion about group goal-setting. Chapter 4 gives directions for 11 steps that constitute the process to be taken during the group meeting. Chapter 5 addresses evaluation (self-assessment and goal achievement), recordkeeping (for tutor and learner), and lesson planning. Chapter 6 describes the activity of a group that has been together for some time, in order to show how group work changes over time. Chapter 7 offers encouraging words about the effectiveness of collaborative group instruction. The appendices contain a description of the authors, ideas for stimulating group instruction, other strategies for reading instruction (such as hints for memorization and a discovery method for spelling patterns), sample forms for reading tutors, examples of learner goals, and 31 references. (CML)

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# Small Group Tutoring

## *A Collaborative Approach for Literacy Instruction*

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# Small Group Tutoring

## *A Collaborative Approach for Literacy Instruction*

*by Judy Cheatham, Ph.D., V.K. Lawson, Ph.D.*

***Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.***

*5795 Widewaters Parkway,*
*Syracuse, NY 13214*

*All proceeds from the sale of this book go to further the work of LVA.*

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## About LVA

Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., a national, nonprofit, educational organization, provides materials and services to assist in the development of volunteer tutorial programs in Basic Reading and Conversational English (ESOL). Expanding beyond its own network, LVA supplies corrections, library, adult basic education and other literacy programs with materials and consulting services in tutor training, program organization and management.

## About the Authors

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Portions of other LVA publications have been incorporated or adapted for inclusion throughout this manual. They are: ***Read On! II Instructor's Guide*** (Lawson, 1988); ***Reading With Children*** (Laminack, 1989); ***TUTOR*** (Colvin & Root, 1987); ***Small Groups: Basic Reading*** (LVA, 1985 op); Portions on the "Cycle of a Group" were adapted from Beth Broadway's discussion of Tuckman's work in ***Small Groups: Basic Reading*** (LVA, 1985 op).

# Preface

Since you are reading this message, you already know the magnitude of the illiteracy problem in the United States. About 27 million teens and adults are classified as functionally illiterate; that is, they have trouble reading materials such as street signs, menus, job applications, fertilizer directions, baby formula cans, want ads, and bus schedules. The task of helping those who want to learn seems monumental, especially as awareness campaigns and publicity activities continue to draw more and more learners to literacy programs.

Fortunately, this push comes at a time when a mass of research in the learning of literacy processes (listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing) shows that small group collaborative learning is extremely effective for many people. Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA) and other similar organizations continue to make significant strides towards solving the problem of illiteracy through the tradition of one-to-one (OTO) tutoring. However, the addition of small group tutoring to a program maintains the focus on the individual learner, while adding the demonstrated value of group interaction.

This book is intended for literacy tutors who will be teaching in a small group situation. For LVA programs, collaborative small group tutoring is intended as an addition to one-to-one instruction. Each approach to tutoring has its own advantages, each being appropriate for given learners at specific points in their learning situations.

This book assumes that you subscribe to a philosophy of language similar to that described below:

> (a) language is for making meanings, for accomplishing purposes; (b) written language is language--thus what is true for language in general is true for written language; (c) the cuing systems of language* are always simultaneously present and interacting in any instance of language in use; (d) language use always occurs in a situation; (e) situations are critical to meaning making (Altwerger, Edelsky and Flores, 1987).

It also assumes that

> in teaching reading, you will take advantage of your learner's own interests and experiences . . . . your teaching will center on your learner's experiences, vocabulary, and needs. You will expand that knowledge by reading to him, encouraging him to read silently on his own, and by directly teaching word recognition processes of decoding and use of context [as the need for such instruction arises in meaningful, purposeful situations] (***TUTOR***, Colvin and Root 1984).

**(phonology [sounds] in oral language; orthography [symbols] in written language; morphology [grammar]; syntax [order]; semantics [meaning]; and pragmatics [use])*

The material in this book reflects over 25 years of research and experience working with adult new reader/writers, and also incorporates insights from such LVA publications as ***TUTOR***, Colvin and Root (revised 1987); ***Read On! II Instructor's Guide***, Lawson (1988); and ***Reading With Children***, Laminack (1989).

While this book is based on many tutors', trainers', and researchers' experiences, each of us has our own styles and our own personalities. You will naturally adapt the suggestions in this book to your style and to that of your learners. We trust that after you begin to incorporate collaborative group learning principles into your instruction, you will report, as have other tutors, phenomenal positive changes in learners' reading, writing and self-directive abilities.

This book is consumable. Read it. Discuss it with others. Write notes in it. Make it your own. Then share with us and others what you learn in your collaborative group.

# Chapter One: Philosophy

## Why Small Groups?

Some of us, because of our past training, may not have considered small group tutoring at all. We may be familiar only with one-to-one or classroom instruction. However, there are several reasons for using the small groups approach, the most important of which is the support network that can and should be established in a small group setting. Such peer support is not available in the one-to-one or more impersonal, larger classroom setting. When group members collaborate, their individual knowledge of a topic is shared; each learner then becomes a teacher. In this way, each member's level of knowledge is raised, vocabulary expanded and new ideas encountered. It is important that literacy programs consider small group tutoring in addition to one-to-one when seeking to provide effective, individualized learning instruction as stated in ***Reading with Children*** (Laminack, 1989, p.2).

> When several adults work together toward a set of common goals, and when those adults have several characteristics and experiences in common, there is tremendous potential for building a sense of trust and community. As each meeting becomes an opportunity to share knowledge, experiences, successes, and concerns, learning itself becomes a cooperative venture. The group becomes an open forum for discussion of the strategies and materials presented in the program. The tutor and learners in the group soon discover that each member brings a slightly different perspective on similar concerns. These different points of view help to generate options and alternative applications of the strategies presented. Additional materials may also surface that can be used to reach the common goals of the group while working toward individual goals at one's own pace.
>
> One practical reason for working with a small group, from a program administration perspective, is that one tutor can facilitate the growth of three to five adults.

## Collaborative Learning

A whole school of thought contends that we learn from each other, from our interactions with others and with our environment. We can refine our thinking only

as we discuss with others, as we read what others have written, or as we listen to what others say. This collaborative learning sees all people as social beings and learning as a social event. During the sessions, you will encourage learners to talk about a topic, to listen to what others have to say, to consider what the author wanted to say (when they read) and what they as writers wanted to say. Reading and writing, both group and individual, are based on interactions between all learners and the written texts.

During the collaborative group meeting, the small group of three to five learners will act together to:

1. tackle a task,
2. break that task into steps,
3. formulate strategies for performing the task,
4. test those strategies orally or on paper,
5. refine the strategies,
6. complete the task.

Also, at times, people on their own or in pairs will develop individualized topics and work on writing, silent reading and direct instruction of sight words and patterning.

However, collaborative group learning recognizes that every person has something to share, something worthwhile to contribute. In the collaborative group, as in all good teaching situations, authority is shared. The structure of the group facilitates this happening. Every learner has a unique responsibility to the group. Critical thinking and all the other language processes--listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing--occur in the give and take of the collaborative situation. The group empowers the learners, helping them realize that through their experiences in living, loving, working, they have much to offer.

Collaborative learning, by **requiring** that participants develop strategies to tackle problems and **forbidding** instructors to feed answers, emphasizes that learners are capable of creating learning strategies. Think about the way children learn. They learn by exploring their surroundings. They learn from their interactions with others. Contrary to the myth of Romulus and Remus being raised by the wolves and later becoming the noble founders of Rome, no baby ever learned to talk by listening to a wolf--or listening to a news commentator for that matter. We learn to talk, to read, to write, to think, by having an audience listen and respond to us and by listening and responding to our audience.

As literacy practitioners (tutors, trainers, administrators), most of us feel that this impetus towards collaborative learning is long overdue--especially as we seek

ways for one tutor to serve three or four learners at once without sacrificing the quality of the lesson or the integrity of the learning experience. The collaborative group approach can provide the pluses of group support and interaction without sacrificing individualized attention.

One important asset of the collaborative approach to tutoring is its result: confident, self-directed learners! In the collaborative group situation, there is no "teacher" to give easy answers. Each member of the group participates as the group works together to find answers. Each participant becomes a teacher for the others and each participant learns from the other members of the group.

Most people who volunteer their time each week to help others are anxious to try methods which have been proven effective in teaching adults. For this reason, we present you with this tutor's guide to collaborative learning in small groups.

## Collaborative Learning in Literacy Programs

You will adapt collaborative learning for the literacy population. For example, in an ideal collaborative learning instruction, there are no right answers. Instead, group members share opinions and perspectives. In some of our experiences, there certainly will be right answers (as in direct instruction and in editing for mechanics of spelling and punctuation). Still, a modified collaborative approach will enable us to elicit those answers in a new way.

People learn to discover patterns and make generalizations through repeated exposure to materials as new information is related to what they already know. In your sessions, instruction will be done using discovery strategies based on the material being discussed. This approach through the integration of listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing activities takes place during the time in the session when help is needed.

Collaborative group work can be effective even with the learner who does not know all the sounds of letters or cannot yet form letters. Those learners still have plenty to offer in discussions, in response to other learners' writing, and in their own writing process. In fact, they will learn through reading and writing while helping others learn as well.

# Chapter Two: The Small Group Format

Although collaborative group learning involves more than meeting in a small group, we can a learn a lot from the current experience of the small group format.

## Organizing a Group

Literacy small groups often fall into one of four categories. Some are **dysfunctional:** they will not form; learners will not participate once they do form; anyone who ventures an opinion is automatically designated the leader; and in some cases group members become hostile. A second type of group is **leaderless**: there is no exchange of ideas; members clam up, reading only to themselves if they read at all. A third type of group is **on-task**, willing to talk and listen, but even among this group of reader-writers, much of what they share with each other is non-committal, non-directive, and generally of little help to other group members. And sometimes, especially with basic writers responding to group members' papers, peers even misdirect each other. The kind of group we are aiming for is one which is **functioning**. This fourth type of group is on-task and involved. In functioning groups, the learners have developed a sense of trust in each other and an expectation of learning (George, 1984).

Once we realize that there can be more to groups than just several people meeting together, how do we work to build a functioning, supportive group situation conducive to learning?

Part of the answer is that we need to organize learning groups as carefully as we match learners and tutors.

### Factors to consider in group organization:

***1. Does a person want to be in a group?*** Is that person capable of being in a group? Some particularly shy or apprehensive people might not like the idea of having their reading problems exposed to others. On the other hand, a group can provide an excellent support system for its members; group members often share common characteristics and problems. In fact, a type of bond often develops which many find comforting and reassuring. In essence, the group becomes a community of learners. Besides each learner agreeing to be an active participant in a group situation, he or she also needs to be both willing and able to adjust to the group's decision on time, frequency and place of meetings.

***A word about ability level.*** Beginning reader-writers are characterized as feeling isolated and alienated, as viewing themselves as stupid and unable to learn.

In a group with people on similar but not identical literacy levels, there may be less fear of embarrassment than in a group which might include significantly more advanced reader/writers. This does not mean that those less advanced learners should be excluded. Discussion (expressing opinions and exchanging ideas) is an adult activity; it is also very empowering for all learners when they realize they have opinions to give. You as tutor need to be aware of the differences in the learners' knowledge and provide opportunities for the less advanced learners to make contributions to the group. Of course, you might also provide additional attention for any who need it, perhaps with a one-to-one tutor or taped books for additional pre- and post- practice of reading materials which the others are using. Reading levels, as determined by any test, should not be a primary consideration for grouping.

***2. What is the group's reason for being a group?*** It is desireable to have a similarity of goals or interests in a group. A group whose members share a common interest (career advancement, finding a job, enrolling in ABE, parenting, general pleasure reading, current events) or come from the same community tends to be more cohesive and supportive. Experienced group tutors indicate that group members can come from a variety of ethnic or religious backgrounds, be of either sex and vary in age and ability level but still develop into a cohesive learning group. If the group is one which is forming around "learning to read and write better," you will have to wait until the first meeting for the discussion of goals to see what the common ground might be.

Most people are members of a group--church committees, unions, veterans' organizations, sport teams, and informal networks of neighbors and friends. The idea of working in a small group with a mutual purpose is not foreign to them. Joining in a literacy small group with its built-in support networks can be reassuring to the timid and stimulating for the outgoing learner. The esprit de corps of the "we're all in this together" idea will do much for attendance and motivation.

***3. When is the best time and place to meet?*** During the initial meeting, you will discuss this point with the group members who actually attend. Time and place will be based on when it's most convenient and what sites are available.

## Obtaining the information

It is imperative that you begin with a personal interview (see Appendix VI for sample interview form). This interview should be conducted by the potential group's tutor, the program's matcher, or someone else whose role it is to interview prospective learners. The following is addressed to whoever will do the actual interviewing.

If the interviewer is not you, the tutor, then you need to discuss your concerns as a group tutor with the interviewer so that the learners have clear information on

which to base their decision to join a group. The interviewer should also have read this manual in order to know both the philosophy and approaches involved in collaborative group work. Besides gathering information about the prospective learner, the interviewer should be evaluating the potential of this person to work successfully within a group.

The interview, of course, should be private. The interviewer must make it very clear that joining the group setting is an option, not a requirement. The learner needs to understand that although he will be working in a group setting, he will never be singled out; he will never be embarrassed in front of peers. In collaborative group work, the tutor calls on the group or asks for volunteers but never singles out an individual learner. However, it is also imperative that the learner understand his particular role in a group setting. He must be willing to participate so the group can function properly.

To help learners decide whether they want to join a group, talk to each of them about a few requirements. Emphasize the fact that group members will be working together much of the time.

In a recent study (Cheatham, 1989), it was found that absenteeism in collaborative groups was only one-third of that in traditional classes and the drop-out rate was only one-half. When asked why they were staying in class, each learner in the collaborative situation made some mention of the non-threatening group, the strength in numbers, the help they could give and receive from their group members, the responsibility they felt as a group member. This kind of information should be conveyed to the learner during the interview.

The experience of many tutors has shown that two, one-and-a-half to two-hour meetings a week are most effective for group work. Learners need this information ahead of time in order to understand the amount of time commitment they are making.

The interviewer must find out the best meeting times for each learner and take the opportunity to emphasize the importance of regular attendance. Talk about the misconception some learners have when they think, "I'm only one; they really don't need me." In a collaborative situation, there are several fallacies in that line of reasoning because of the following.

1. Activities are often planned for two or more people; any absence hurts the others.
2. The group will cover quite a bit of material in a one and a half hour session; the absentee will have a difficult time catching up.
3. The absentee will not know the homework for the next session and will have to catch up there, too.

4. Most importantly, in a collaborative group situation, group members provide moral and intellectual support for each other. Since the focus in a collaborative group situation is on the community of learners, if a member of the group is not there to offer his abilities, then those remaining members all suffer.

It's important that group members make a commitment for a definite period of time--six weeks, three months or longer. Making such a commitment for a definite period of time allows participants to plan and arrange their schedules. It also frees people from the need to give reasons for ending a voluntary commitment which, in turn, makes it more likely that they would return for a second and third series. Of course, a group can decide to continue or re-form and continue once its three-month, six-month or whatever length commitment is completed. The learners should know that the learning sessions have an end, but there is also the possibility of beginning a new group or continuing. They will also be encouraged to see learning as a continuous process as it is for participants in regular continuing education networks.

If the learner decides against group instruction, he or she should be assured that an individual tutor will be assigned once one is available. If it is discovered that the learner has any special learning problems, is at Level l or a non-reader, one-to-one instruction may be offered in addition to the small group setting.

## Roles

Keeping the group on track involves constantly clarifying both tutor and learner roles. In a typical group situation, we might expect to find a tutor and three to five learners, for a total group size of four to six members. In order that expectations be set and met we must define roles of participants. "What am I supposed to do?"

### Tutor's Roles:

The tutor has different types of roles in a collaborative reading-writing situation.

*Housekeeper.* You will have to make sure that you (or a designated person) have taken care of:

1. setting a day and time based on learners' schedules,
2. securing and confirming a site,
3. notifying learners,
4. making name tags (at the first session),
5. checking the site to ensure that it is properly equipped (table, chairs, easel, pad or black board, the possibility for refreshments).

*Group facilitator.* After housekeeping responsibilities, you will also have to assume the roles of leader-counselor-negotiator as the group forms, faces conflict and frustration, is strengthened, and finally gels.

You should take an active role as group leader during the early stages of the group's development. Because this new group situation may make some learners uncomfortable, they need to know that someone is in charge. Your role will change during the life of the group. Some of the leader activities you will perform are

1. call the group to order,
2. facilitate the process of getting acquainted,
3. facilitate the process of setting goals,
4. moderate disagreements or heated discussion,
5. acknowledge and respond to learners' feelings,
6. bring discussion to a sense of closure,
7. adjourn a particular session,
8. disband the group study when the time comes.

Note that 4, 5, and 6 above are roles from which you will increasingly withdraw and in which group members will increasingly take a more active role.

*Instructor.* In addition to being the housekeeper and the facilitator, you also have the role of instructor. You will decide on the support materials, continue to help clarify objectives during the lessons and develop lesson plans as your assessment of learners' progress evolves. As time progresses, the group will begin to be productive, to show more maturity and become more accepting of individual differences, and your role as the authority will lessen. Discussion will become more objective as you set the tone of flexibility and relaxed acceptance.

**Learners' Roles:**

The learner's role is that of discussant (based on his/her personal experiences), reader, writer, commentor and editor. These roles are ones which each group member will grow into with varying degrees of success during the life of the group.

## The Cycle of a Group

In the discussion of roles above, the life cycle of the group and how roles change during your sessions together was mentioned. The following discussion is based on the framework of B.W. Tuckman and M.A.C. Jensen (1977).

In the initial, **forming** stage of a group's development, you need to help learners get to know one another and orient them to the group's purposes and proce-

dures. In this stage, your attention to detail provides the sense of security that allows the learners to take risks. You are trying to foster that sense of trust necessary before any learning can take place.

During this formative stage, the learners will demonstrate a high degree of dependence on you. Relationships among learners may be tentative or non-existent. It is important to accept this dependence as a characteristic of the formative stage of a group. In fact, in your capacity of facilitator, you must provide the support the learner needs to develop a sense of trust before he or she can become a self-directed learner. That is, the learner has to trust your good will, your altruistic motivation for trying to create the situation for him to learn, before he will venture forward in this new collaborative group methodology. It is at this forming stage that group and individual goals are discussed and clarified.

At the next stage, **storming**, you especially will need to spend some time on responding to learners' feelings. As the learning process begins, group members are going to express emotion, especially anger and frustration. Conflict is normal, healthy and necessary if the group is to progress. Try to handle the conflict in a constructive way, not to eliminate it. One reason for this stage is that as these learners become involved in a literacy program, the hurt, pain, frustration and embarrassment which occurred during all those years of not being able to read and write are bound to surface during discussion periods. Also, as learners begin to learn, they will want to test their wings--to assert themselves a little--and they don't quite know how. Third, learners often enter a literacy program with unrealistic expectations; as they begin to realize that learning to read and write can't be done overnight, they become frustrated.

Most importantly, you are teaching with a method by which they probably have never been taught; you are insisting that they take responsibility for their own learning; you are shifting the authority from you to them. This transfer of authority is difficult--it's hard for you to give it up and it's hard for them to take it.

Regardless of the reasons for anger, frustration or conflict, you can diffuse or redirect some of these feelings just by the way you respond to the learners. Never, for example, deny the learners their feelings. If a learner says, "I hate school. I wouldn't put one foot inside a classroom," your response should always be one which acknowledges the learner's feelings. In this case, you might say, "You feel angry for what happened to you, Jane." What you have done is to design a response that captures the feeling expressed by the learner.

As another example, you might hear, "I want to fall through the floor when I have to sign for something at the post office." An appropriate response to either of these could be, "You are embarrassed because you can't read," or "It really bothers you that you can't read."

Interaction among learners becomes more open and eventually increases during this and following stages. If discussion between two learners becomes too involved, intervene to include all members of the group. Although discussion is important, you must keep the group on task or you'll spend the whole session talking and no time reading and writing. You can do this with a little levity; just say, "Hey, we could talk about that all night. Let's move on. We certainly have strong feelings here. What kind of information do we need before the rest of us can make up our minds?" or some such acknowledgement and task reminder. Another good response is, "It's okay to disagree." Members of a group are not going to agree all the time; every person has a right to an opinion. In a collaborative setting your goal is to have people learn to acknowledge other opinions, to understand reasons for these opinions, and to accept differences.

You can also prevent some unnecessary conflict by being careful how you phrase certain topics. In other words, it's not the topic that's the problem, it's the way you phrase it and the context or situation of the audience. For example, you might have a discussion about "babies having babies." That's relatively neutral unless there are members of the group who quit school at age 14 to have babies.

After trust has grown strong and personal feelings are able to be expressed, the group will settle into the next lively, productive stage. In this **norming** stage you will become the guide, the one who promotes democratic procedures of listening and respect. You will also let go of authority so the group can state the tasks.

The next stage is **performing**. In this stage you are the resource supplier, and the group takes on the routine of looking to each other for answers.

Eventually, the group must come to an end. **Adjourning** should not be done abruptly. Allow time for affirmation, sadness, grief and closure. Some feelings of apathy, conflict or dependence may emerge here; this is normal and natural as group members come to terms with the ending of the group.

You can help the adjourning group by encouraging an acceptance of the grieving and affirming it through celebrations and affirmations. Look at the lesson in Chapter 3 on setting goals. In that lesson, you are providing instruction based on real situations with consequences. You can do the same thing in the disbanding (adjourning) situation. Your task could take the form of these questions: "What have you liked best about the last few months of instruction?" or "What will you miss most when our group adjourns?" Then you could make those questions the basis of a session as presented in Chapter 4.

You might guide the group in planning a celebration of group success. Each learner could be featured by stories, poems or presentations written and read by fellow group members. You could do these in sessions or you could allow learners to work out of class. By this time, the learners could prepare their own booklets

written about their experiences in the program, with each other, or with whatever focus the group decides. The point is that bringing the group to closure is an important point of the process of disbanding, and generally you must take the initiative.

At this time you also discuss the beginning of a new topic or a new series of meetings. But first you work together to acknowledge success and an ending.

## Summary

Again, it is up to you, the tutor, to structure the learning situation in such a way that each learner is always a participant. The next chapters give specific, concrete ways to encourage participatory learning in the collaborative, group setting.

# Chapter Three: Getting Started

All tutoring sessions should have two overall objectives: to improve the group members' literacy skills and to help each group member accomplish individual goals.

## Organizing

(The following sections on organizing are adapted from ***Small Groups: Basic Reading***, LVA, 1985, op.)

From the very first session begin to establish a team spirit in your group and to convey the concept that this and every session will be important, meaningful and purposeful.

### Prepare

Before the first session, contact all learners and impress upon them the vital importance of their being at the first meeting on time. Make sure they each know how to get there. As they arrive, present their name badges on which first and last names are printed in large, manuscript letters. You, too, should be wearing such a badge. The name badge serves two purposes. It gives each of the learners a sense of identity and individual worth, while also providing a way of seeing how other people's names look in printed form. It is their first "word recognition" exercise.

In addition to the name badges, have each person's name listed on a chalkboard or easel pad. Be sure to use the same kind of manuscript letters as you used on the badges.

For your first meeting, a round table is desirable. If a round table is not available, use any table, but avoid sitting at the head of it. This physical arrangement plays down traditional teacher-student roles and cues the learners that these sessions will be organized differently from what they may have experienced before.

Show your respect for your learners by encouraging opinions from all, drawing out the reticent, recognizing the contributions of each one, promoting participation and interaction--all these actions are useful in conveying a feeling of acceptance.

Start the meeting by telling the learners that the goal of the program is to improve reading and writing; do not say that it is to learn how to read. Also tell them that you have three specific objectives for that first session: (1) to get to know each other, (2) to agree on some rules that will direct the tutoring sessions and (3) to set goals.

## Encourage Participation

The following from ***Tutor Training Manual***, LV of NYC (1983) are helpful hints which you can use to encourage discussion and participation of all group members. While introduced at the first session, they will be used throughout the life of a group.

1. Make frequent eye contact with learners to encourage them to talk.
2. Try to maintain a non-judgmental atmosphere by holding back your opinions and not criticizing those of the learners.
3. Ask open-ended questions that encourage critical thinking and reflection (e.g., "What would you have done in this situation?" instead of "What did the man do?").
4. Give learners time to respond (many tutors are scared of silence!). If there seem to be problems, try rephrasing the question. Avoid answering your own questions.
5. Try to paraphrase learners' comments and respond to both the feeling and content of what was said. Paraphrasing will usually encourage learners to elaborate on what was said.
6. Encourage learners to talk with each other ("Bill thinks that getting involved would help. What do other people think?").
7. Ask learners to elaborate on what they say ("Explain that to me, Mary").
8. Create structures where learners will feel comfortable talking: (a) divide group into sub-groups to work on particular tasks, (b) provide tasks which encourage participation within the sub-group as discussion topics, writing activities and games, (c) vary the class structure from time to time to provide opportunities for as many learners as possible to be comfortable and involved (e.g., pairs, groups within the larger group, total group instruction).

## Introduce Group Members

Sit with the group at the table. This fosters the "we're all in this together" spirit. Tell them that everyone will talk about him- or herself for a few minutes so that everyone knows something about each member of the group. Start by telling your name, occupation, family status, hobbies and perhaps your reason for being there. Your introduction of yourself will serve as a guide for the learners as to what is expected of them.

Ask for a volunteer to begin. You can expect something like "Well, my name is Tom Pittman and I am a painter by trade. Right now I'm not working because winter is always a slow time in the painting trade. I am married and we have two boys, six and two years old. I like to fish."

After the members have learned about each other, they will begin to become more comfortable and identify themselves as a group.

## Discuss Responsibilities

Next, discuss the rules that will direct the group. Re-emphasize the importance of having everyone present at each session. Solicit reasons for attending from the group members and encourage discussion of these reasons.

Give out your telephone number or that of the program office and stipulate that you must be informed in advance if anyone finds he or she will be absent. Be sure you have group members' phone numbers, assuring them that you will call them if meeting plans have to be changed. After the group has met several times, you might suggest they exchange phone numbers in order to notify the group of an unavoidable absence or to check on the homework assignment. Some groups have found it helpful to distribute or to make calendars with the group, marking down the date, time and place of the group sessions.

Discussing the ground rules for the group presents you with your first opportunity to involve the group in making a significant decision. For the first time, the participants will see that individual member's needs and preferences are being considered and that the democratic process is at work. Even these early decisions on rules contribute to the sense of togetherness and mutual dependence.

Explain that there are a few ground rules. Suggest some and solicit others. Encourage discussion among the learners through questioning. Write the rules on the board with learners writing their own versions for their own use in their notebooks. Include such things as being patient with others who may be having trouble keeping up, listening to the suggestions and questions of others, making positive comments or questions, not having to read aloud unless they want to and allowing others to finish before speaking.

Some groups impose a "No Smoking" rule within the meeting room even if the building regulations permit smoking. Also, a two-hour class should include a ten-minute break.

Our goal, remember, is to allow people to develop into self-directed learners. For that reason, your goal is to work yourself out of a job! In the early stage of the collaborative effort, you will be a group member, a facilitator, a moderator; never be a direct supplier of information until, through questioning, you can elicit no further responses from the group.

Actually, you may have to remove yourself from the situation by even walking out of the room on occasion to break the dependence that the group may have on you. This idea of breaking dependence is one of the main differences between collaborative learning and traditional group work. What we want to do is transfer authority from ourselves to the learners.

Traditionally, learners have not been encouraged to see themselves as authorities in their learning or to accept responsibility for it. Instead, they have learned to sit passively and expect the teacher to pour in the information. But in the collaborative situation, we want to foster active learning. We want to create a safe atmosphere based on mutual respect among group members.

**Tutor Responsibilities:**

***1. Modelling when necessary.*** You need to model an informal "greeting" at the beginning of each session and after the break in a two-hour session; model the reading of words, lists, sentences or paragraphs produced on the board; model readings from print material in the assisted reading part of the lesson; model giving appropriate comments and asking open-ended questions on the writing tasks. Your task is not to give mixed messages by saying one thing while modeling a conflicting behavior.

***2. Setting the tasks.*** Prepare a clearly defined, clearly achievable task for each session. Much of the instruction for that session will be directly related to this task. These tasks arise out of the individual and group goals of the learners.

***3. Asking questions.*** You need to get into the habit of asking instead of telling. In a collaborative situation, try to pull answers out of a group to redirect the group and clarify what has been said or written. Asking questions takes practice for most of us. Traditionally, we supply information instead of eliciting it. Helping learners come up with their own answers through our questioning is one of the most valuable tutoring techniques we can learn.

**Learner Responsibilities:**

Real learning requires active participation on the part of the learners. In general, we expect the learners to assume the responsibility for their own learning. They should:

1. attend classes regularly and on time;
2. help plan individual and group goals;
3. help design activities or strategies to achieve those goals;
4. participate in those activities, making positive comments on others' work and asking clarifying questions;
5. participate in making ground rules (no smoking, listen to others, etc.);
6. show respect for each other's rights and opinions;
7. agree to confidentiality;
8. do homework;
9. keep records.

This list is short, but if learners do these things, they will be involved in all phases of their learning experiences.

## Plan Schedule

One of the first decisions the group will make concerns the frequency and duration of the sessions. Of course, the learners are at that particular meeting at that specific time because they indicated in their individual interview that this was one of their possible times for attending. However, the actual decision needs to be confirmed after you and the learners have met and discussed anything that may have come up since their interviews. Concurrently, they will be considering the meeting site. It may very well be that the location of the class sessions will have a significant influence on the frequency and duration of the sessions. Accessibility, availability of public transportation, expense and ride-sharing possibilities are all elements to be considered in choosing an acceptable site.

Although the group will make the final decision on the frequency and duration of meetings, its choice will essentially be one of ratifying a selection suggested by the you. Of course, that suggestion will reflect the comments made by the group's members during their interviews. The group members will look to you for your guidance. Remember, there are no hard and fast rules, but experience has shown that two sessions per week, each of two hours' duration, is an effective pattern. Some people who have tried once-a-week meetings have found that learner retention suffers and interest wanes.

As the group considers how long each class meeting should be, remember that travel time needs to be added to class time in thinking of overall commitment to each session.

After several weeks of following the initial schedule, the group may decide to evaluate its appropriateness. There is no reason you cannot change the schedule if the group wants to do so.

## Confirm Site

The suggestions made earlier about site selection assume that you have several possibilities to choose from.

You may not have such a luxury, though, and the group's needs may further narrow your choices.

In any case, there are two types of meeting places you should avoid if possible. Do not meet in someone's home, yours or a participant's. "Neutral" locations are much better. Secondly, avoid meeting in a typical classroom. Many of your learners will have negative associations with traditional school rooms. You may find space in a library, a bank public meeting room, a community room at a mall, a church or a union hall. To allow for flexibility in the group, the room should be large enough for paired and individual work.

The amount and variety of support equipment you will need in your meeting room will, of course, be determined by the nature of your instructional materials. A standing easel pad or chalkboard is essential.

The room is ready. Your learners are ready.

## Setting Goals

Formulating individual and group goals is important to both the learners and the tutor for several reasons.

***Goals:***

1. provide the group with a sense of direction;
2. help the tutor learn more about learner needs, making day to day lesson planning easier;
3. provide a measure by which to evaluate particular lessons;
4. provide learners with a sense of satisfaction as they draw close to or meet their goals.

It is important to involve learners in setting goals and planning activities as much as possible to:

1. get learners actively involved in deciding what to learn;
2. encourage learners' input about their needs and interests;
3. prepare learners for becoming self-directed (LVA-NYC, 1983).

### How was the group formed?

First you will need to consider two kinds of groups when setting goals: those formed around an announced topic or focus (such as **"Reading with Children"** or **"Improving Job Performance"**); or those formed without an announced topic. The session on goal setting will differ accordingly.

***1. Group formed around an announced topic:*** This group needs to work on strategies for defining the subgoals and tasks that will lead to meeting the goals. Out of the group discussion individual goals and activities will develop. Chapter Four walks you through a session on discovering strategies for getting a driver's license. As the focus goal is being met, individual goals will arise as well as opportunities for the topic to be tailored to the interests and needs of each learner.

***2. Group not formed around an announced topic:*** This group could follow the goal setting strategies suggested below based on the discussion of individual goals. For example, the group could be asked to suggest a common goal they might have (they want to be able to read TV listings and decide for themselves what they'll

watch) or a common approach (reading the newspaper, writing letters) or a common piece of reading material (the same book for group discussion and individual writings). Individual goals could also be accommodated while encouraging discussion by using concepts such as "freedom," "honesty" or "responsibility" as they relate to diverse topics such as raising children, getting a driver's license or improving specific occupational skills.

## Involve Learners

Since the goals involve each group member individually and collectively, it is important to involve learners in the formulation of those goals as well as in the planning of activities designed to accomplish them.

The steps suggested for you to follow in formulating goals, during your first session, provide the same integrated, collaborative approach that you will be using as the organizing principle in your other lessons--only the content differs.

This linearity is the problem in training "how to tutor." Most of us would like somebody to say, "First you do this, then you do that, finally you do the other." Out of necessity, the "steps" presented here are given in a linear fashion. It is essential that you as a tutor give learners practice with listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing throughout each part of the session. The purpose of the 11 steps is to help you become more comfortable with the whole language philosophy as a framework for presenting a lesson. These steps do not imply that you must structure every single lesson in this way, never skipping a step or modifying an exercise, always going from first to last and then beginning again. These steps are merely a linear guide, but by no means are they meant to impose a rigidity on the lesson.

For example, most groups go through discussion, responding, revising and editing several times before they are satisfied with their products. Think about your own or a friend's or colleague's writing. We all write, read to audiences (even if the audience consists of one), elicit comments, revise, rewrite, reread and again ask for comments until we are reasonably content with what we have written. It would be unreasonable (and you would never finish a lesson!) if you went through this long series of steps every time learners did any reading or writing.

As you become more comfortable with viewing these 11 steps as recursive, sometimes even simultaneous, you will become more comfortable in picking up in the middle, switching things around, or doing whatever the learners deem appropriate. The point is to ask, not tell, as you provide ample opportunities during the lesson for readers to listen, speak, think, read and write.

## Suggested Steps

We will formulate goals using a participatory, collaborative process (See the chart, "Cycle of a Collaborative Small Group Session" on following page). The eleven steps reflecting this process give practice with:

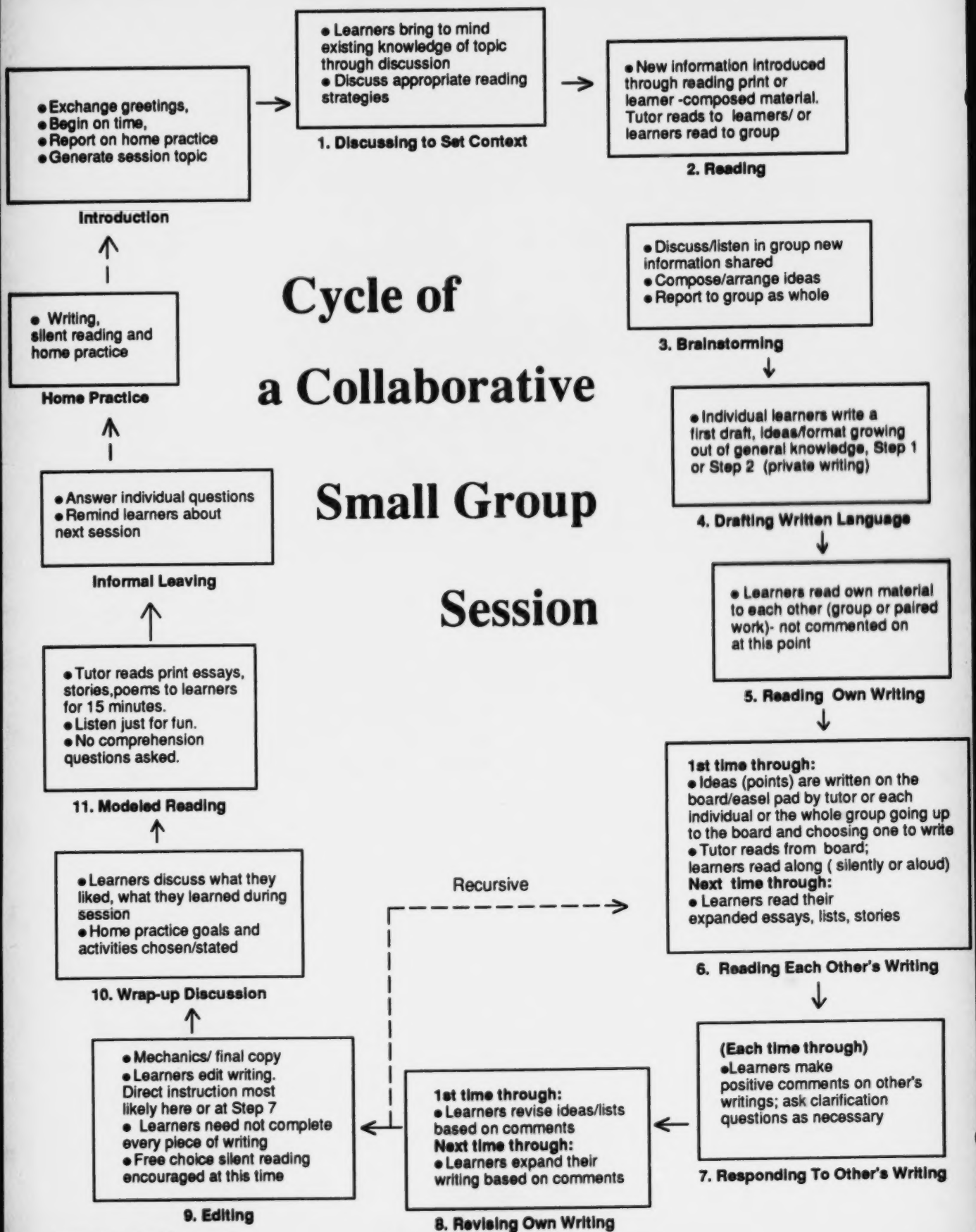
1. discussion to set the context
2. reading
3. spoken language (brainstorming)
4. written language
5. reading their own written language
6. reading other's written language
7. responding to each other's writing
8. revising
9. editing
10. wrap-up discussion
11. free/modeled reading

Many kinds of learning actually take place while a person is practicing/learning to read and write. Because reading is understood to mean obtaining meaning from print, and because this process is not self-evident to the new reader, it is helpful to make reading and writing strategies known to the learners.

The strategies are general statements about how a reader--any reader--processes information. They are automatic in experienced, self-directed readers. By talking about them to the group you enable them to develop skills which will help them to read with understanding. You want to help the group members think of themselves as readers and writers. You can do this by having them reflect on what readers do, on what writers do. For your convenience, some of these strategies are presented in Appendix III. Use them in your discussions throughout the lessons as appropriate.

***1. Discussion to set the context.*** One of the basic principles of learning is to build on what a person already knows. This new information, added to that which a person already understands, allows one to make sense of that new information. In learning to read and write, it helps the new reader-writer make prediction about words, sequencing and just "what belongs." It also serves to reinforce a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem ("I'm here to learn to read and write, but look at what I already know--I'm not so stupid.") as well as introduce new information from the rest of the group members. It is at this time the tutor introduces the topic of the new print material.

# Cycle of a Collaborative Small Group Session


• Exchange greetings,
• Begin on time,
• Report on home practice
• Generate session topic
Introduction
• Learners bring to mind existing knowledge of topic through discussion
• Discuss appropriate reading strategies
1. Discussing to Set Context
• New information introduced through reading print or learner -composed material. Tutor reads to learners/ or learners read to group
2. Reading
• Discuss/listen in group new information shared
• Compose/arrange ideas
• Report to group as whole
3. Brainstorming
• Individual learners write a first draft, ideas/format growing out of general knowledge, Step 1 or Step 2 (private writing)
4. Drafting Written Language
• Learners read own material to each other (group or paired work)- not commented on at this point
5. Reading Own Writing
1st time through:
• Ideas (points) are written on the board/easel pad by tutor or each individual or the whole group going up to the board and choosing one to write
• Tutor reads from board; learners read along ( silently or aloud)
Next time through:
• Learners read their expanded essays, lists, stories
6. Reading Each Other's Writing
(Each time through)
•Learners make positive comments on other's writings; ask clarification questions as necessary
7. Responding To Other's Writing
1st time through:
• Learners revise ideas/lists based on comments
Next time through:
• Learners expand their writing based on comments
8. Revising Own Writing
Recursive
• Mechanics/ final copy
• Learners edit writing. Direct instruction most likely here or at Step 7
• Learners need not complete every piece of writing
• Free choice silent reading encouraged at this time
9. Editing
• Learners discuss what they liked, what they learned during session
• Home practice goals and activities chosen/stated
10. Wrap-up Discussion
• Tutor reads print essays, stories,poems to learners for 15 minutes.
• Listen just for fun.
• No comprehension questions asked.
11. Modeled Reading
• Answer individual questions
• Remind learners about next session
Informal Leaving
• Writing, silent reading and home practice
Home Practice

***2. Reading***. The first reading strategy used is to handle the book, look at the title and have learners leaf through the story. Have learners make predictions about the story based on their observations. Then, read the story aloud to the group with the learners following along silently. You might then read the story with the learners reading aloud. This choral reading step of assisted reading may take a while to get used to as most people are not comfortable with speaking at the same time as someone else. But persist. This technique allows the learner to "read" material beyond his or her independent level and provides a common basis for discussion. Those who can read better will be practicing fluency which will aid in comprehension.

One excellent way to introduce the individual goal setting activity is to use printed materials which reflect literacy learners' goals. One story available is ***"My Goal,"*** by a literacy learner from Pendleton County, Kentucky. (This story appears in ***Slices of Life: Kentucky Writers for Kentucky Readers***, available at no charge from the Lexington, Kentucky, **Herald-Leader**.)

In ***"My Goal,"*** the author writes that she entered a literacy program for one reason: to read a book to her daughter. Her daughter, who is now in her twenties and has her own child, used to walk around the house, carrying her favorite little book, ***The Bunny Rabbit***. When she was little, she'd climb up in her mother's lap, dragging the book with her. Her mother, a non-reader, would point to the pictures and make up stories. It broke the mother's heart that she could not read.

In time, as the little girl started to school and became a reader herself, she stopped climbing into mother's lap, demanding to be read to. No words ever passed between mother and daughter about the subject. The mother, however, cried on the inside.

After the daughter married, the mother entered a literacy program. Her goal? To read to her child. On Easter Sunday of 1988, after the mother had been in a program for over a year, the daughter, now expecting her own baby, came home for a visit.

"Go back in your room and get me your favorite book," the mother said.

"Is it time for me to take it home with me to read to my own?" asked the daughter as she returned to the den with ***The Bunny Rabbit*** in hand.

"No, I plan to keep that book," was the mother's reply. "Here, now, you sit in my lap." The daughter looked at her mother incredulously. "I'm your mother and I say sit in my lap," repeated the mother.

Laughing, the daughter sat in her mother's lap. The mother opened the book and began to read, "Once upon a time . . . ." Mother and daughter both burst into tears; after a few minutes, though, the mother asserted herself: "We've got to cut this out. I have waited 25 years to read to you and I intend to do it!"

After you read the above story, using assisted reading, you go to discussion. A question to ask might be, "And what is your goal in the program? This was her goal. What is yours?"

If the learners initially have trouble with the concept, you can prompt through questioning: "Goals can be work related. Are there things at work involving reading and writing that you would like to do better?"

It's common for some learners to say, "I just want to learn to read better." You could ask, "What do you want to learn to read better?" and continue to explore their interests and needs.

You have already done steps one and two--read about one learner's goals and discussed them. In so doing, you've set the context of the session. Now, you're ready for step three:

***3. Practice with the spoken language (Brainstorming).*** Summarizing the reading and discussion activities, you could say, "We have read about a woman who set her goal and accomplished it." Then state the next activity you want the learners to focus on: "Take two or three minutes and tell each other at least one goal you have." Give the learners a time limit to keep them secure. They need to know that this activity is not interminable. In practice, however, if they talk for ten minutes, and they are talking on task, let them talk. If not, call discussion to a halt.

After their discussion, ask for volunteers to tell you what they have said.

***4. Practice with the written language.*** Summarize, drawing the group's attention back together and signaling the next step: "Okay, now we've told each other our goals. Let's take five minutes and write down at least one or two goals." As always, assure the learners that they should write the best they can; if they cannot spell a word, have them write as many letters for the sounds as they can or draw a line. Assure them that no one else will see an individual's writing. (We will postpone editing skills until later.)

***5. Practice with reading their own language.*** Again summarize, indicating a transition to a new activity. "We have told each other our goals. You have written down one or two goals. Now take five minutes and read your goals to each other." As the tutor, you move out of the way, not interacting at this point.

***6. Practice with reading each other's language.*** Draw the group's attention: "Let's get all the different goals on the board." You then have two options--you can have them read to you and you write the goals on the board, or you can ask for volunteers (have them all come to the board at once if they want to) to write their own or others' goals on the board. Since goal setting should be done at the first or second session, it will be less threatening to have them read to you and you write. Throughout the session, you will be encouraging them to do all their own writing, but at this point, they have already written once.

They have read to you; you have written the goals on the board or easel. Now model the reading from the board asking the learners to read silently with you. Then you might ask the learners to read aloud with you the second time through the list. This is a second use of assisted reading.

***7. Respond to each other's writing.*** The main activity at this point is to discuss the goals as they appear on the board. Clarification questions should be encouraged. Introduce the idea of each person making at least one positive comment either on the goal or the manner in which it was phrased. Prompt honest comments (e.g., "What are particularly good points here?" or "What makes this very clear?").

Often learners select goals that may take a year or more to reach, such as getting a better job or reading the Bible. Sometimes they select very broad, hard to measure goals such as being a better reader. In these cases, you might ask the group to help formulate the goals in such a way that they are more easily measurable and/or attainable. Suggest they write down something they can see or do. For example, you can't see a better reader but you can see someone reading two books. You can't see a better job, but you can see someone reading a want ad.

***8. Practice with the written language.*** Now you want to encourage the learners to write more, based on the discussion of goals which they have already written on the board. Since the words are already on the board, the learners could now put down the correct spelling next to any words misspelled. This is not a tremendous undertaking at this point because you have asked for only two or three goals; they have said, read and written the words; and you have written them correctly so they can check their writing with the board.

The elaboration or development provides expanded practice with the learners' own writing about goals. You might begin by writing on the board--reading as you write. Use your own knowledge of your group. If you are working with beginners and asking them to write, a sentence is plenty. If not, you can ask for two or three sentences, or an even longer paragraph. The procedure is then repeated as learners produce their texts:

- each learner reads his or her sentences to the group,
- the group comments,
- the learner revises based on the group's comments,
- the learners again read to group,
- the group comments; each learner may or may not revise further.

***9. Practice with editing the written language.*** Encourage writers to be their own editors. Ask them to keep track of the kinds of clarification questions they are asked by fellow writers as well as the nature of the positive comments. Have them focus on revisions which clarify meaning in their editing in addition to mechanics.

As the sessions progress and you have dealt with mechanics and spelling as they've shown up, transfer to each the responsibility for reviewing his or her own writing for spelling and mechanics questions.

After learners have met for several sessions and know they can write, let them know that they can abandon a piece of writing, just as they can abandon reading a book. Collect their writing to be kept in the learner's portfolio. You should go over the writing, noting the pattern of errors so you know what type of individual practice/activities you want to work on with each learner. Keep track of the length of written pieces as well as the frequency and the type of spelling errors made. Remember, research has shown that since 1906 (Hoyt) people learn to write by writing, not by correcting grammar and usage errors. Since most people are already frightened of exposing themselves on paper, you want to demystify writing, not strengthen their fears. Stress that every writer has an editor and that editing is merely a part of the process. Keep a record of the types or pattern of errors each individual makes. Use this information in your lesson planning for direct instruction with individuals as needed and in the group as appropriate.

***A word about direct instruction***. You will become aware of the kinds of word recognition, punctuation or composition problems the learners are having by noting the kind of help they ask for from you and the others in the group, the kinds of corrections they make on their papers as they work with the group and the kind of errors you find in the papers they give to you.

If the problem is one that the whole group is having (capitalization, for example), during the time they are re-writing or editing their papers, take three to five minutes, write some sentences on the board, ask them to identify the capital letters and ask what capital letters are used for and what they mean ("They signal a name or the beginning of a statement or a question"). If you don't get an answer, have the group examine a piece of text you've photocopied or a newspaper article, circling all the capital letters and working together to see if they can predict when capitals are used. They are looking for the pattern of use. Have them state the pattern and review their own papers for correction.

If different members of the group are making different errors, talk individually about the problem (two to three minutes) during the time they are working on their writing. If there are words they consistently miss in their reading, you might want to have them memorize them as sight words; if it's a pattern or letter/sound problem, work on that. Directions for direct instruction of sight words, pattern words and letter/sound (graphophoneme) are given in Appendix III. Once you are confident of how to do direct instruction, be aware of opportune times during the lesson

when such instruction will be most valuable. This could be when the error is recognized during writing and the learner asks for help. Do not stop during reading to correct or teach; rather, wait until the learners are at a stopping point in the session. Stopping during the reading will distract from the focus on reading for meaning. The content of direct instruction arises from the individual's reading and writing. This type of instruction is woven throughout the session and becomes an expected, integral part of the instruction.

In subsequent sessions you might do some direct instruction, but during this first, goal setting session, the reading, discussion and writing already done are probably quite enough new ideas and processes for one session. Learners all have a list of goals which they take home in their notebooks. This list is a tangible piece of evidence that they have learned and done something important and are on their way to learning.

Point out that the group has set individual goals. Review them, allowing each person to elaborate on goals. Now is the time to set some group goals. Ask before you tell: "What are some goals we might set as a group?" It might be that the group members want to read a novel or biography. They might want to write their own book. Programs across the country have learners writing their own autobiographies, cookbooks and experiences with literacy. They might all want to get a driver's license or fill out job applications. They might all want to read the ***Bible*** or the want ads. Encourage learners to talk to each other to decide upon group goals.

In order that integrated listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing processes be employed in relevant instruction as much as possible, conduct this session on "goal setting for the group" just as you conducted the previous one on "goal setting for the individual." Learners will be listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing in the context of an important, real-life issue.

Each learner's goals and the group's goals should be written down and placed in the learners' folders. It is important that both you and the learners look at these from time to time to keep on track and to see that progress really is being made.

***10. Discuss the lesson.*** In this first session the group has done a lot. You can help affirm their achievement by leading an informal discussion about "what we've accomplished." Some of the things you might elicit in response to "What have we done tonight?" are "approved a topic and set up individual goals, learned ways in which we're going to learn to read and write better, found two or three other people who are interested in the same things we are."

Learning should take place in every session. Learners must leave with a sense of accomplishment. This summarizing discussion about what was accomplished, what

activities were enjoyed and which were not will help develop this sense. During this portion of the session, discuss with learners what type of home practice they will do--read, find out more information about their goals or revise their writing.

Be informal, be warm, be patient. Ask for what "we've done." They have accomplished a lot and you can help them affirm themselves.

**11. *Do free/model reading.*** For the final 15 minutes of your lesson, read to the group from print material. This could be an essay, a newspaper article, a short story or any other topic/material in which the learners have indicated an interest. Choose things that are just above the current reading ability of the group. This practice exposes them to words, phrases and descriptions that they might not see in print for a while; however, having exposure to the oral language builds vocabulary and expands the learners' options in writing.

The woman in ***"My Goal"*** had set her goal and accomplished it. Fortunately she had a flexible tutor. Think of what would have happened had the tutor said, "But your daughter is grown. Let's think of another goal."

# Chapter Four: The Lesson

In the group setting it is imperative that you, the tutor, be seen more as a guide and less as an instructor or authority. Therefore, it is critical that the tone for a cooperative learning environment be set in the first small group meeting.

The first thing the group should do in each session, after informal greetings, is review homework. Then develop (or continue from a previous session) a topic for this session. Thus, you and the group need to formulate a list of topics. This list should either develop out of the focus, (reason why the group formed) or out of the earlier goals discussion. The topic should be worded in such a way as to generate good discussion. Thus you could work on topics which are extreme or provocative.

Remember, as you plan the small group lesson, you will need to find appropriate materials in keeping with the selected topic and to have multiple copies of materials so that learners have their own copies.

## Elements

So how do you start? It might help to review the cycle of a collaborative session we discussed in the goal setting sections. The process in each session is the same, though the amount of time spent on each step will vary with the topic and materials used. First, you will work together to select a "topic" which will engage learners with each other. For the first session the topic was helping the learners to set and clarify their goals for being in the program. Principles, concepts and the processes of speaking, listening and reasoning will be learned as the group works through their reading and writing activities.

The group's goals will provide the basic or focus topic for a lesson or series of lessons. If the group was formed around a program-offered topic such as reading with children, a specific occupation, employment skills, book discussion or transition into pre-GED [or any other topic], you have the luxury of having a variety of topic-specific materials to offer right from the beginning as trigger events for the initial reading step. However, if your group's goals have emerged from a group which was formed around some other criterion, such as a convenient meeting time or location, your lesson content will at first be less predictable. But, after your initial meeting, the group will have a finite range of options based on the learner-selected goals.

It is your responsibility to devise a task or activity which will draw and then expand on each learners' knowledge of the topic. Basic learners are much more suc-

cessful if they are given some specific direction in what is expected of them. In fact, a good way to get basic learners to fail is to give them some non-specific task that they have no idea how to handle. We are not stifling creativity when we give more direction. We are simply trying to keep frustration levels down. We've all heard the cry, "I just don't know what to do."

After a topic has been selected from among the learner-edited list, turn that topic into some type of task. A task has to have a consequence. Listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing in the real world have consequences. You want to formulate a task with a consequence. What follows is an example of a topic, a task and a consequence.

### The Topic

Suppose, for example, the group wants to center its attention on some "real world" activity and chooses "taking the driver's license test" as their goal. You have discovered their interests either in the initial interview (so the group was actually formed around the quest for the driver's license) or during the goal-setting session during your first week of instruction.

Because you are interested in a learner-centered situation, you want the listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing to be related to their expressed goal of getting a driver's license. After the learners have determined their goals, you want to elicit some topics to work on for the next ten to twelve weeks. Remember, ask, don't tell. You will probably want to review the discussion of the steps on page 21.

### The Task for Instruction

Approach the task setting in the group session. The topic of the series of sessions is taking the driver's license test. Now make that into a task, in the form of either a question or a situation. Once the task is decided on, make sure you write it out, either on the board or on paper; each group member needs to see it. In this case, the task could be "What kinds of things do we have to do before we can accomplish our goals?"

## Process

***1. Discuss to bring known to mind.*** [Refer to Chapter 3, page 22, "Cycle of a Collaborative Small Group Session."] Encourage the group to choose its own topics or goals. Your job is to look at the topic chosen by the group and then break

it down into manageable sections. In this lesson, for example, the task is to write out a plan of action. Obviously, you can't use taking the driver's license test as a group task because it's too broad. Which aspect, then, do you focus on: Problems involved with actually taking the test? How would you prepare for taking the test? Where do you go to take it? When is it offered? Then elicit questions from the group as is illustrated in this particular sequence. Remember that providing a task which is manageable and well-directed sets learners up for success. Think of your own experiences with writing or discussion. It's much easier to debate whether Napoleon was a genius or a madman (specific) than to discuss the Napoleonic wars (general enough to base a library's worth of work on!).

***2. Practice with reading.*** Write the task on the board or easel pad. You read the task. Read it as you normally would, modelling for the learners. Reading normally helps with comprehension and tunes the ear to the stream of speech. After you have read it, ask the group to read along with you, again reading normally (assisted reading).

***3. Practice with the spoken language (Brainstoming).*** You want to allow time for discussion (speaking, listening, thinking). Be very clear as to what you want the group to accomplish. "OK, now, let's take five minutes. What do we need to do before you can take the driver's test? Everybody think of at least one thing to tell the group."

Step back and listen--and don't interrupt. The reason you have said five minutes (you can say one or two or three, if you wish) is that you want to assure the group that this discussion business is no big deal. It'll be over soon. It's completely non-threatening. Of course, they might talk for fifteen minutes. If so, let them. You can be flexible, but you don't want them to panic because they have no idea what you expect.

To digress for a moment: what happens if nobody says a word? Wait a few minutes, step forward again and repeat the questions. Let's say they still won't talk. Very calmly, you move back to the group and recast the same question, "What would you need to know first before you could get a driver's license?" You are prompting. You will think you are pulling teeth, but, really, you are prompting. Under no circumstances do you talk for the learners. Do not give up. You have set your limit at five minutes anyway, so if discussion does not work the first time, it does not appear as a failure of the group. You can switch the focus to why each wants to get a driver's license.

What is happening here? You are blurring the line between learner and teacher. You are transferring the authority. These are the literacy learners; not you. Among the group, they know what they need; not you. They are the authorities in this situ-

ation; not you. But they have probably never in their educational experiences been in that role. Basic reader/writers have learned not to lay their egos on the line by venturing forth an opinion in a learning situation. So they often clam up. Don't give up. When your facilitating enables the group to develop enough confidence to discuss in a group setting, you will have made a real difference in their lives. You have to let go of the authority, and they have to take it; it's hard to do for both of you.

But let's think positively. Suppose they begin talking the first time. You can enter the discussion from time to time, but more as a prompter--not a lecturer or even a facilitator, if you can avoid it. The reason you want to disassociate yourself from the group as often as you can is that they will continue to look to you for the "right" answer, even though, in the discussion, they can be as "right" as you.

***4. Practice with the written language.*** After they have finished their discussion (listening, speaking, thinking), you are ready for the next step, getting learners to take notes (thinking, reading and writing). "We've just talked about what we need to do. Now jot down on paper what we need to do." Assure them that they, not you, will be reading their own notes.

What if the learner says, "I can't write"? Your response could be, "If you can talk, you can write. Nobody will see your list but you. Write down beginning sounds and use lines for the rest. Don't worry; just jot down as best you can."

What if the learner says, "How do you spell 'application'?" You could say, "Don't worry about spelling right now. This is informal writing. Just get your thoughts on paper."

What if your learner still will not write? Do not say anything about it in front of the group. Before the next part of the writing, tell the whole group something like, "I know some of you are probably scared by the writing. Writing is not some great mystery. There are different kinds of writing. If you were writing to the President, you'd pay close attention to spelling and punctuation. For yourself and your group at this moment as we jot down notes, don't worry about those things." If the learner still won't write, talk to him after class and encourage him.

Another way to deal with reluctant writers is to have them talk into a tape recorder. They can then play back their own dictation, sentence by sentence, and write it down. Unless a learner is physiologically unable or you are working with an absolute beginning reader, you should not be doing much of their writing for them. If you write for the learners, you foster dependence instead of independence.

***5. Practice with reading their own written language.*** When you see that everyone has written something, you are ready to move to the next step, asking them to read their own notes aloud to the other members of the group. Each person reads his or her list to the group but you stay out of the way.

We are working on the communication process. We want learners to speak, write and read to an audience about something of consequence. Reading their own work aloud in this non-threatening situation is good for several reasons. Obviously, learners get practice in their reading. (They just "wrote" their own lists of learning, so they know the words.) Second, reading their own writing emphasizes the fact that reading and writing are inextricably connected. Third, this practice de-mystifies writing. Writing is not limited to the professionals. Just settle down and write.

After the group members have read their lists to each other, ask them to read these lists aloud to you. You write them on the board. After you complete the list on the board, read it aloud, modelling in your normal reading voice. Ask the learners to read along with you silently.

For those of you who may be concerned that we encourage informal writing (e.g., "don't worry about spelling"), when you write on the board, you will provide the correct spelling. You can even say, "If you'd like, you can copy those words you had misspelled from the board." You can also explain that every writer has an editor; in this case, you are the editor.

After you write the lists on the board, then you can work on ordering them. Ask, "Does it matter which steps we do first?" You can also check for completeness. Ask, "Can you think of anything we've left out?" Just remember: ask, don't tell.

Look what we have done so far--listening, speaking, thinking, reading and writing in a meaningful, real-life situation. These adults are learning to give and take, to respect others' opinions while gaining the confidence to give their own opinions. In terms of literacy processes, learners have worked on their oral language. They have written and read their own texts. You have written their words on the board, modeled reading (as they read silently with you) and provided the opportunity for assisted reading.

They are also learning a very important concept: the importance of an audience. An audience is especially crucial in writing and speaking. People who have no practice in speaking or writing to an audience have not learned to be specific. Their oral and written language is filled with vague references, allusions to things or people that only they know about, lots of empty words like "it," "this," "thing" and so on. The group activities are a wonderful way to learn a sense of audience, to learn to give elaborated yet specific information.

If group members don't understand something, encourage them to ask the writer for clarification. At first, you might need to model some appropriate responses: "That's interesting, Jane, but what did you mean by _____ ?" "I didn't follow that last sentence, Mary. Could you explain it to me again?" When we talk or write without a response from a listener or reader, we don't know if we are making ourselves clear or not. The idea that we must be clear so others can understand us pro-

vides a way for us to get outside ourselves; as Piaget says, it provides a way for us to "decenter" ourselves.

***6. Practice with the written language.*** We have talked, listened, read and written. The next step is to prepare a more formal piece of writing. Ask the group to write a paragraph--two or three complete sentences explaining what needs to be done before they can take the driving test. You might provide the first sentence: "Before I can take my driver's test, I have to do many things." Remind them of what they have already done. Have them look at their lists and at lists on the board. Point out that the list they have compiled includes the things to do to get a driver's license. Then, have them go ahead and write.

Allow several minutes. Most questions about spelling will already be covered by the list on the board. If there are other spelling questions, say, "Just get that down. We'll edit later." Do the same with capitalization or punctuation questions.

***7. Responding to each other's writing.*** Ask learners to read what they have written to the group. As they read to you, you might write on the board, and then you model the reading from the board. You could do this when writing lists or short paragraphs. They read along with you silently--this, of course, is part of assisted reading. Do not worry or correct them if they move their lips or mumble along with you. Some people read (and listen) this way to fix meaning in their minds.

As this sharing is going on, you want to teach the group to respond to each other's writing. This particular exercise emphasizes the recursiveness of the total language experience. You can use it here in Step 7, above in Step 5, or anytime a person is reading aloud. As the reader reads to the small group, instruct the listeners to raise a finger when something is read that they don't understand. The reader marks the sentence in the margins. After the reading is finished, the reader goes back to the margin notes, rereads the particular line or lines, and asks for comments. In this way, the listener can say, "I don't know that word" or "I didn't know who you were talking about" or "Could you clear that up for me?" at an appropriate time without breaking the stream of speech needed for comprehension during that first reading of the passage. Another way for the listeners to indicate they have questions on the material being read is for them to make written notes to be shared once the reader is finished.

The readers will note the others' comments on their papers and use them to revise the paper, or an individual may ask the group about the appropriateness of the others' suggestions. In this particular reading-responding-revising-rereading activity, the tutor does not need to interact. If you are called upon to make a judgment or offer a suggestion, do so only after you have asked the opinion of every member of the group. Even then, try to avoid giving your own opinion so that you do not direct the development of the writing.

Every learner in the group should expect to make one positive comment about the writing. You may have to elicit these comments at first. Ask "What kinds of things make for good writing?" Go to the board and write the responses. You will get answers like "Good words" or "Big words." You respond, "What are big words? What are good words? What makes a good word?" You are looking for "descriptive words," "words that paint pictures," "clear words," and "words that say what you mean." You will probably get answers like "It flows good" or "It makes sense." Most of the answers will have to do with concise vocabulary, clear structure and development and elaboration of ideas. You might get comments about good grammar and good spelling. That's fine, but they can't see each other's writing so spelling is not a problem.

List the learners' responses to "What makes for good writing?" on the board. Then when you ask each learner to make a positive comment on the material which has just been read, the learner will have a whole list from which to choose. Learners may also make remarks like "I was interested in the topic" or "I liked it because it was short." That's fine. Laugh and be positive.

***8. Practice with rewriting.*** If the group's comments point out that there are problems in understanding the meaning of the writing because of misplacement of sentences, use of vague vocabulary, lack of specific detail or other things, ask the learner to do some revising. The learner might want to add concrete nouns or adjectives. Tell the learners that you want to be able to see what's on the paper. For example, you can't see "It was expensive" but you can see "It cost $150.00." You might not see "pretty" but you can see "black, shiny, curly hair."

Basic writers--whether literacy learners or college graduates--often have trouble with detail. They know what they're talking about, and they expect their reader to know, too. Again, in making the writers more aware of the reader's, the audience's, needs, we are helping them to decenter and to make them more aware that communication is a two-way street.

A note about the writing instrument: if the learners have computers available, it's wonderful to compose the paragraph at the computers. Corrections are easily made, and the learner has a clean copy at the touch of a button. If you don't have computers, suggest that learners write with no. 2 pencils. Corrections are easily made without "white-out" or strike-throughs.

***9. Practice with comments and editing the written language.*** After each learner has read his paragraph aloud to the group and the group has responded, you could say something like "Now it's time to edit." Include the information which would answer the questions the group asked you. "If you have a question about spelling, punctuation, capitalization or anything, you have to ask the group before you ask me." This part of the hour is wonderful. The learners find that they might not

know how to spell "writer" but somebody else--besides you--does. And the one providing the answer gets a real boost in self-esteem.

At times the learners will not trust each other's answers and will try to involve you. Try never to give an answer outright. Rather, use prompting questions to help learners discover the answer. If, for example, the word in question is "writer," ask the group,"How do you think you spell it?" Write the answers on the board: riter, writer, writter. Ask for discussion on each. "Why do you think it's 'riter?' " and so forth. Have dictionaries or word spelling references for the learners to look up the three possibilities. The point is, nobody learns anything if you just tell. By constant questioning, you help the learners pull together what they already know.

Have the learners edit their work. Then have them put the work in their folders. These folders of written work are especially valuable as the weeks pass. It's very encouraging for the learners to thumb through their work, looking at how much more fluent they become as time goes by. Also, the folders have the qualities of diaries. Thoughts and feelings about important topics are recorded.

During the rewriting and editing phases of the session, you will have the best opportunity to do direct instruction/discovery process for mechanics such as capitals, spelling and sight words. As you work on these discovery activities, keep these teaching methods in mind:

1. ask, don't tell
2. don't single out an individual in front of the group

***10. Group assessment-wrap up.*** Prior to ending the session with the selected "free" reading material, lead the group through a discussion of what they learned, what they liked, what they want changed in the session and what other kinds of things or topics they want to pursue in future sessions. At this point you discuss homework assignments. In this case, if they've come up with lists of what they need to do, homework might be getting forms, making calls to get answers to questions, using phone books or writing about why they want a driver's license.

***11. Free/modeled reading.*** In the last 10 to 15 minutes of each session, read to the learners from print materials on a topic in which they've shown an interest. This material should be from an authentic, real-world source. It could be an essay, a short story, poem, a play or a news or opinion article. You do not ask any study questions about it. If spontaneous discussion arises after you're finished, let it continue, but bring the session to an end with a move to share refreshments or gather up your materials and make your goodbyes.

# Chapter Five: Evaluation/Record Keeping/ Lesson Planning

Some major concerns of learners, tutors and program managers are these: Is progress being made? Are people learning to read and write with the corollaries of better listening, speaking and thinking? And how can we facilitate learning happening more effectively?

In order to measure progress, make adjustments in instruction and plan enjoyable lessons, you need to (1) do initial assessment of learners (2) do ongoing evaluation of learners' progress and session's effectiveness (3) keep records of progress and activity on the basis of which you will plan lessons.

We are really dealing with another circle of activity here; the results of one activity feed into and provide the basis for adjusting the other.

## Evaluation

In addition to the discussion during your sessions, periodically, you and your learners need to evaluate what has happened.

It used to be that we wanted to measure the success of a program by quantifying how many learners were reading on a certain level. Now, however, we are interested in multiple methods of evaluation. That is, we still are interested in progress in learner reading ability, but we want to know how the learner thinks and feels about himself, about his learning, about our effectiveness with the group. These are all affective concerns. We have also broadened our cognitive concerns. Has the learner's oral language changed? Is he better able to articulate his ideas on paper and orally? Can he follow directions better? Has he become more fluent in his writing? Is his writing more developed, showing more awareness of audience and more attention to structure and detail?

These are the types of questions you need to find answers to. There are several ways to find those answers. At a minimum, you need the records or forms provided. In addition, you need to keep a portfolio of all the learner's revised, edited writings. From time to time, you should, with the permission of the class, tape discussions. That way, you will have documented evidence of changes in articulation and English usage. You should also keep supplementary work which is given to the individual or which is done in a workshop setting. At the top of this work, you need the date and the concept involved. (e.g., capitals, pronunciation).

All these records should be examined in a monthly conference with the individual. You can easily flip through the writing portfolio and say to the learner, "Look

how much easier it is for you to get words on paper these days" or "Look how easily you use capitals these days." The point is that the tutor and the learner have something tangible by which they are able to compare what the learner was doing at point x to what he is doing now at point z. You can say, "Look at the work you've done on your own." You have the progress sheet which he has filled out himself. The purpose here is to show the learner concrete evidence of his success. Actually, if you keep good records, the cognitive gains are easy to substantiate.

It's not as easy, however, to measure affective concerns. These are attitudinal and rely on the learner's openness. One way to find out how learners are feeling about themselves and their learning is to have them keep a journal about their learning experiences which they are to turn in to you from time to time. Since journals are private, tell them to write "Don't Read" across or fold the page's edge to binding of any section that they do not want you to see.

## Self-Assessment/Self-Esteem

Another way to assess their perceptions of themselves and of the group is to ask a question during instruction which will prompt discussion concerning their feelings about learning. One question might be, "Why do you think people enter literacy programs?" If you think they will be reluctant to talk in front of you, remove yourself from the room for five or ten minutes and let them discuss it on their own. Then, when you return to continue with instruction, you can have them focus on why they entered the program. The writing assignment could be a paragraph telling of their experiences. Other questions could be, "How did you feel about yourself?" and "Do you feel differently now?" Of course, you want to add a "why?" to both questions. As the group progresses, a question could be, "What is the best thing about working in groups?" or "What is the worst thing about working in groups?" What you are looking for is a series of relatively non-directive questions which allow the learner to explore his feelings and express them openly, without the fear that he is going to hurt your feelings or incur your wrath.

## Goal Achievement

There are still other measures in this multiple measures collection. Did the learner get a job? Has he learned to fill out applications? Can he read the newspaper? If not, how about sports, comics, Ann Landers or Dear Abby? Has he applied and/ or received a driver's license? Can he read a bus schedule? Have each learner keep a list of "New Things I've Never Done Before." It is very empowering to the learner to go down that list every month or so!

Aside from looking at your learners' progress and their assessment of you and the program, how do you evaluate yourself? If the learners are participating,

making constructive comments on each other's work and reading and writing between sessions, you have a good mix of learners and have fostered a learning atmosphere. However, if the learners are not internalizing any of the processes, are needing directions repeated or are not taking the initiative, perhaps you are not removing yourself as you should, making them rely on themselves and each other. Tape yourself. Are you telling or asking? Do you acknowledge learners' feelings? Do you seem rigid? Do you allow learners to have their goals--or your goals? It is very illuminating--and unsettling--to hear or see yourself tutor. Don't be impatient with yourself. Look for the overall ternd of several meetings. We have talked about decentering our learners; often we have to decenter ourselves.

Evaluation should be an on-going process. You want to evaluate yourself, the group, the program and the individual. You want to use multiple measures to get a total picture of what's going on cognitively and affectively. In other words-- evaluation means more than just how many sight words Mary read today!

You will begin your record keeping with the initial intake assessment. Review the assessment form given in Appendix VI.

## Record Keeping

**The Tutor's Records .** As with any tutoring you do, you will need to keep individual reports on your learners. Their reasons for being in the program, their initial and revised goals, their achievements (goals met), their ***READ Test*** (Colvin and Root, LVA, 1982) scores, samples of their writing, lists of books or articles they've read, and periodic interview notes of their responses to reading/writing and the lessons--records of such things all help you to measure each learner's progress and to plan lessons. In addition, participating in the assessments which go into such record keeping helps learners to focus on their studies and to know that their efforts are taken seriously and appreciated. Use the LVA intake and update learner report forms (see sample report forms in Appendix VI) as a guide to organize your records.

In addition to the reports on individual learners, you will also want to keep records for the program generally. The number of preparation and contact hours, each learner's record of achievement (goals met, test scores), attendance, each learner's ideas for improving and/or guiding the sessions, each learner's reason(s) for leaving the program and the like will help you or your group evaluate your program's effectiveness.

**The learner's records.** Each learner should keep a progress chart. You have your records, but most learners are able and willing to keep their own progress charts. They feel a sense of accomplishment as they check things off.

Progress charts can be as individual as each learner or can be small group composites. They can be kept for any length of time. A three-month chart is motivational and allows enough time for the learner to see progress. All these records should be examined in a monthly conference with the individual. In this conference, look at the progress chart and the writing folder with the learner. The conference gives you the opportunity to spend a few minutes with each learner, to praise successes, and to discuss problems. What to keep: attendance, list of materials read, list of materials written and their own spelling list. In addition, as a record file, learners should have a current work file, which would contain their own spelling list, current writing project (from first to most current draft) and ideas for future writing or research.

Writing samples are a wonderful way to encourage basic writers. Fluency develops early on and is visible to the eye. You can read and discuss what the learner has written. In doing so, you are preparing the learner to assess his or her own work for its strong and weak points.

Of course, learners will vary in how fast they learn. You must emphasize that there is no competition. Let learners know that learning can not be rushed; their rate of learning will depend on their previous backgrounds, current ability and effort. In the collaborative learning situation, the sense of competition fostered in some types of learning should not be present.

## Lesson Planning

You will need to make a group lesson plan. In addition to whole group activities, you will need to be ready to provide practice and instruction for the individual learner depending on the specific needs of that learner. On each session's lesson plan, you will need to record specific errors which learners made during a session for which you want to prepare individualized lessons. For example, suppose Mary and Joe are in the same group. Mary has trouble forming certain letters. Joe has excellent penmanship but cannot spell well. For homework or during a time when learners are working on their own, Mary could do extra practice with letter formation and Joe, extra practice in spelling.

Just because you are working in a small group setting, do not fall into the trap that many instructors fall into. If one learner needs help in something, many tutors assume that everyone else in the group needs it too. Thus, the tutor assigns all drill or practice--drill and practice needed by only one or two! Learners feel they are wasting time if they don't need this particular help. Much valuable time is wasted in that type of activity, and only a few benefit. Your lesson plan for the individual should be based on his or her specific needs (See Group Lesson Plan, Appendix VI).

# Chapter Six: On Down the Road

If you were to walk into a collaborative group session after the group has been working together for a few weeks, you might be greeted by the following scene. Two learners are discussing their papers with each other, reading parts aloud, asking questions, listening and providing feedback. In another part of the room, a learner is listening to a tape and reading at the same time. The tutor and a fourth learner are spending some time working with capitalization. Others in the group are not having problems with this so the tutor offers this fourth learner some individual attention. After a few minutes, the tutor joins the person with the tape recorder and then is called to join the two learners discussing their papers.

Doesn't look like group work, does it? But looks can be deceiving. You have walked in on this group at a time during their two-hour session when learners have been through a group sequence and are now doing those things they need to do alone, with a tutor or with a peer. At the beginning of this book, you were informed that group work will never replace individual instruction--nor is it intended to. The two work very nicely together in a situation which seems the best of both worlds. In the collaborative group part of the lesson, learners receive all the advantages of working with peers. But after the group sequence, learners receive the special attention they need whether from the tutor, the tape, the computer or a peer.

For example, with the two men working on papers, the reading-writing-discussion is undergoing refining-revising-editing. The woman with the tape is frightened of the idea of writing. The tutor has provided her with a tape player to "tell" her ideas to. Now the learner is transcribing her own message, stopping the tape as she needs to. The woman working with the tutor requires special attention today. She feels uncomfortable writing about her last experience at the driver's license center. While working on capitalizing and spelling, she is getting a chance to clarify what her dissatisfaction is and how she will deal with her next visit to the center.

All four learners, however, are working on a common goal which they formulated at the beginning of the instructional sessions several weeks ago. Today, the task is to write essays about their previous experiences with the driver's license test. They have already been through the earlier parts of the sequence. They have read the task, talked about the task and jotted down notes. Now they are preparing their drafts. In a few minutes, they will come back together to read what they've written and to make and take comments about their writing. In this case, they will probably take their drafts home with them to be revised there.

After closure is brought to the instruction, the group will critique the session and plan for the next meeting. What did they like or dislike about this session? What do

they want to accomplish before the next meeting? They might, for example, select a book to take home, plan to make a clean copy of their draft or go to an agency to get more information about the topic. The meeting will end with the tutor reading a short story, essay or something of interest--just for the fun of it!

This group of learners represents small group, collaborative instruction functioning at its best. How did it get that way? Through a transfer of authority from the tutor to the learner; through your commitment to work in a new situation; and through your working to bring forth the best in everybody. It's not easy but it is well worth the effort.

# Chapter Seven: In Closing...

Collaborative group instruction incorporates whole language principles and although perhaps new to you can be very exciting. Most importantly, it works! For those of us who have been trained in the one-on-one or through a teacher education program, it may be difficult to adapt to at first. The first few sessions you go through using the new methods might be really distressing. But keep at it. Have patience. Tutors working with collaborative groups have found that, as the year progresses, the learners open up, discussion becomes interesting and exciting, learners learn, absences fall and the tutors are still around to tell about it.

People used to a traditional way of teaching are not used to actively participating in their own learning. What is going on in a collaborative group setting is the transfer of responsibility and authority from the tutor to the group. This may take a while but the rewards of participating in the development of self-directed enthusiastic learners are tremendous!

To put things in perspective, this type of teaching is as old as Socrates. Socrates answered one question with another question. And collaborative compositions were not uncommon in the Renaissance. Apparently, William Shakespeare and his fellow dramatists sometimes discussed their work, helped each other write, borrowed passages from one another, wrote and rewrote and changed lines as they acted with their various companies. The whole idea of the individual learning on his own is a creation of the last two hundred years. It is widely recognized among scholars that the Greek epics and much of the Hebrew Old Testament were produced collaboratively over centuries by groups of people sitting around and telling stories. It worked very well for the authors of ***The Iliad*** and ***The Bible***. It will work well for us, too!

**Appendix I.**

# Research Background

**Judy Cheatham, Ph.D.**

Collaborative learning is a kind of buzz term in education circles these days, but actually the term is not new. The first mention of collaborative learning in the research journals is M. L. J. Abercrombie's ***Anatomy of Judgment*** (1964). Abercrombie conducted a ten-year study with medical students at University College, University of London. The finding was that interns who derived diagnoses in small groups rather than on their own made their diagnoses more quickly and more accurately than those interns who worked alone.

The second study, also from London, was done by Charity James. The most important thing about her study, ***Young Lives at Stake: A Reappraisal of Secondary Schools***, published in 1968, was the finding that collaborative learning reduced drop-outs and absenteeism among high risk learners. James found that other strategies--one-to-one peer tutoring, learning labs, etc.--were not successful with these at-risk learners.

She theorized that all these other methods ("interventions") represented the same type of traditional instruction (e.g., teacher as the authority figure) with which the learners had failed originally. Collaborative learning, on the other hand, seemed to entice learners to work on tasks by allowing them to work with each other.

In this country, Kenneth Bruffee (e.g., 1973,1982,1984,1986) has done a great deal of research on collaborative learning with remedial college learners in the open-admissions programs in New York. Particularly troubling to Bruffee was that this remedial college population had terrible problems in a traditional classroom setting but they refused help when it was offered. They refused to take advantage of special tutoring after class or in a lab setting. The reason, as Bruffee sees it, is that the help (tutoring or lab work) was merely an extension of the work, the expectation, and the social structure of the traditional classroom. In this setting, the tutor took on the role of teacher, authority figure, giver of all knowledge.

In the case of Abercrombie's work, mentioned earlier, the task was to diagnose the patient. Abercrombie removed herself from the group, allowing interns to talk about how to make the diagnosis, what to look for, what diagnoses seemed likely, what diagnoses could be ruled out--until the group arrived at a consensus. Of course, members did not always agree. The point was that each member of the group provided input, contributed to the discussion, helped to analyze the information; and the group provided the sounding board for bouncing off ideas.

**Appendix II.**

# Ideas for Stimulating Discussion

**Eileen Nelson**

Learning is the formulation and refinement of one's ideas, beliefs, images, values and actions. Unless a planned learning project provides for this kind of growth and refinement in thinking and breadth of knowledge, it can be classified only as the all too familiar "read or listen and regurgitate" kind of situation. How can we as leaders of a group create this exciting way of learning for adults who we know are intelligent but who, for some reason or another, could not catch on to even the typical classroom situation just mentioned? Here we will explore some of the elements which can result in a dynamic project.

**Flexible grouping**

The time for flexible grouping to achieve agreed upon learning outcomes is long overdue. We of Literacy Volunteers of America have the opportunity to take part in leading the way in conducting such groups. Flexible grouping for clearly defined learning purposes can promote the worth of each person and increase his understanding of the world around him. In process it uses the communication skills which he brings with him and helps him expand those skills as he needs them in order to express what he is learning and thinking. This is the ultimate "whole language" approach to acquiring basic literacy skills. Thinking is the fuel which turns the wheels in this group, resulting in a spiral process of questioning, discussion, investigation and assessment which will open the doors to the elusive dimension of real student involvement and a different level of learning.

What does all this mean to us as group leaders? It means:

1) a gathering where purpose and objectives come from the persons in the group, including the leader.

2) a group in which you are the leader some of the time, but you are also a learner.

3) that, even though you are the leader, you do not know all of the answers. Of infinitely greater importance, you do know how to stimulate others to seek answers.

4) that you are the kind of leader who does not hold your co-learners to a single standard of "right" answers. You do not arbitrarily "assign" work to be done. Instead you invite members to think about and share in deciding next steps.

5) that each group member is encouraged to elect his own investigation and research, alone or with a team.

6) that the prime responsibility you carry, as the leader, is to get everyone thinking and sharing ideas and tasks, and that means opening up a discussion. Earl Kelley said, former Distinguished Professor of individual perception at Wayne State University, Detroit, said, "To be consulted and to be treated as an individual allows self-respect to develop and grow."

**Focused Topic**

Through discussion early on, an area or topic of learning can be agreed upon by all members of a given group. Sometimes this step can be shortened by inviting individuals to sign up when presented with several choices. It is also legitimate for the leader, having perceived a common interest among four or five students, to invite them to settle upon a purpose for meeting together. This should result in valuable experience in defining and refining their perceived needs and purposes.

Even though our stated mission is to help adults gain English language literacy for use in daily living and working, any time those adults come together in a group they can achieve a great deal more than that if they focus on an area of learning which can satisfy their hunger for knowledge--knowledge they have missed because they could not read and write; knowledge the lack of which has isolated them from the mainstream. For instance, many learners tell us that they want to get a job or to get a better job. They are handicapped not only by poor reading and writing skills, but by little or no knowledge about the world of work. Suppose in a group they decide to pursue a concept such as **people work and earn money to take care of themselves and others**. In discussing the topic and in the consequent efforts at investigation, all of the expression skills as well as reading and writing will come into play. The need for such skills will be urgent, so that even the most offensive rules of grammar or usage can be set in a framework, place and function. Mastery for a bigger purpose than exercises in a book diminishes fear and resistance to the old bugaboos of written expression.

**Effective Leadership**

Once purpose is established your guidance takes on critical importance, for it is you who must formulate the questions which will open up expression of ideas and sustain their flow. A good leader, truly committed to the success of the learners, will take time to assess his own motivation for taking on this kind of responsibility. He will examine his own beliefs, values and modes of verbalizing, and will decide upon his own ability or lack of it to objectively encourage the expression of beliefs and values which may be different from his own. As in everything else, group discussion can be used or abused by the person in charge. You have the power to promote ob-

values which may be different from his own. As in everything else, group discussion can be used or abused by the person in charge. You have the power to promote objective, unbiased understanding of ideas, or you can subvert the discussion to propaganda ends--in other words impose your own beliefs and values on others. What emerges, then, from a given discussion or series depends heavily upon your skill as a leader, and your willingness to learn and to expand your own understanding along with the other group members.

**Formulating Questions**

The key to a productive process rests with the leader's ability to formulate idea-stimulating questions. Socrates gave us a classic model centuries ago. More recently Phillip Groisser, in his ***How to Use the Fine Art of Questioning*** (1964 ), commented, "In the developmental lesson the teacher asks a series of sequentially planned and arranged thought-provoking questions designed to open a major topic or subtopic." Such thought-provoking questions can be formulated only by a truly thinking leader.

**The Importance of Writing**

Facilitating, or leading, a group in this way is going to involve a great deal of recording in writing as things progress. It becomes necessary for everyone to write. It may even be necessary to give some handwriting instruction at this point. The first job of recording is to assess what each individual's thinking is on the area to be explored. Each group member puts down his thoughts on paper in words, sentences, pictures, or he can dictate privately to the leader. Such individual assessment will be kept and reviewed to determine just what each member has truly learned and gained in self-expression when the topic is completed. This will help each student evaluate what he has learned. After the individual assessment, the whole group can decide upon what they already know, and that is duly recorded on the chalkboard by you or a learner with copies made by or provided to each learner.

**The Questioning Process**

It is at the point of formulating stimulating questions that many of us go suddenly blank. Where do we start? One way of starting is set forth in a framework of questioning which resulted from an Aerospace Curriculum study. It is based upon the premise that great ideas should be taken off the shelf and used by everyone as a means of priming the well of their own ideas. The four great ideas which were selected in the ***Aerospace Curriculum Study*** to support this framework are Relativity, Evolution and Change, Emergence and Continuity. The element which

ideas are first translated into everyday questions which can be adapted to almost any field of inquiry. Use of this way of questioning will lead into getting acquainted with all of the disciplines, which, after all, are only man-made devices for finding out more about the world we live in and being able to use great ideas in our own thinking.

As an example, we can continue with the idea or concept of **work**:

***Relativity Based Questions***

(The following questions are derived from the general idea of relativity, defined in ***Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*** as "the state of being dependent for existence on (or determined in nature, value or quality by relation to) something else.")

1. What is it (work) here and now?
   Explain its nature.
   Itemize what you think you know about it. Record this on chalk board and see that each learner receives a copy at the next session.
   Follow up by consulting a dictionary/encyclopedia.
   Write down new information.

2. If you place it (work) in a different field (somewhere else) here and now, is it the same or is it different? How is it different?
   Explore other countries, other cultures ideas (of work).
   Collect and record guesses and opinions.
   Read books, articles. Look at film/video/pictures.
   Listen to speakers. Organize field trips. Discuss and write about what you learned.

3. If there are others (workers) in the world, are they like us or are they different? How?
   Collect and record guesses and opinions.

4. How can we find out for sure (prove guesses)?
   List possible resources, explore them.
   Revise guesses.
   Record in writing new learning.
   In discussion draw conclusions about the relativity of things and people.
   Record, distribute copies, read.

***•Evolution and Change Based Questions***

The following questions are derived from the general idea of Evolution and Change, defined in Webster as "a process in which the whole universe is a progression of interrelated phenomena."

5. Has it (work) always been like this?
   Guesses. Record in writing why you think so.
6. How can we find out?
   List ways. Use them.
   Revise guesses.
7. How when and why did it begin (people doing work)?
   Consult resources, read, write about it.
8. How has it (work) changed, and why? How do you know?
   Encourage documentation.
   Discuss, draw conclusions on the changing nature of our universe.
   Record, distribute copies, read.

***•Emergence Based Questions***

The following questions are derived from the general idea of Emergence in natural phenomena and in the affairs of man, why trends emerge and recede.

9. Is it (work) more important to people now, or was it more important at other times?
   Document your answers from reading, writing, and other resources.
   Discuss. Write.

10. How do people make use of it (work) now? Does it help them or does it harm them?
   Document answers from reading and other resources.
   Offer informed opinions.
   Write about them.
   In discussion draw conclusions regarding the emerging and receding nature of issues and phenomena (work) as they affect the welfare of people.

***•Continuity Based Questions***

The following questions are derived from the general idea of continuity as proposed by John Dewey in educating the young, involving three steps:

a) analyzing what is now
b) reviewing its history

c) predicting its future based upon past performance and making recommendations for action.

11. In your opinion would you keep it (work) the way it is? Would you change it? Why? Do you think we need it at all? Why?

Discuss. Then write your answers.

In discussion, draw conclusions on the role of history in making decisions for our futures.

Read. Distribute copies

Conclude this investigation with another individual assessment from each person, summing up what he feels he has learned. Compare with the beginning assessment of each. With the whole group examine the learning which has taken place, ask them to draw up a list of what they consider to be the most important things learned, and lead them in a final statement about the project.

For your own evaluation, ask if your leadership accomplished the following:

- Aroused interest
- Promoted understanding
- Developed new insights
- Influenced the formation of ideals, attitudes, appreciations
- Provided on-going assessment of learning
- Provided training in logical and critical thinking
- Allowed for verbal sophistication levels of students by using language which was clear and direct in meaning
- Incorporated many demands for more listening/speaking, reading/writing, and resulted in increased competency in all of those skills for each group member
- Recognized and built respect for the uniqueness of each individual.

The last point above will determine how you handle answers offered from the group. When one member volunteers an answer, whether you consider it right or wrong, engage the others in stating if they agree or disagree, or if they have something to add. When uncertainty arises, ask the members to suggest resources for finding out more. Then leader actively engages in locating and procuring resources. Record all significant remarks on a chalkboard, being sure that you have a copy before erasing. These are used for summarizing and reviewing.

*By permission from Eileen Nelson, former Associate Professor, Roosevelt University, Chicago and Chairman, Dept. of Early Childhood Education, City University of New York. Content adapted from Link Foundation Aerospace Curriculum Study, National College of Education, Evanston, IL, 1958-62, directed by Eileen Nelson.*

**Appendix III.**

# Strategies

## A. Reading by V.K. Lawson, Ph.D.

(Reprinted from ***Read On! II, Instructor's Guide***, LVA 1988, pp. 9-11, 16-17)

As the instructor, you model the reading strategies during your daily 10 to 15- minute reading to the group. You also model the strategies as you introduce new materials. However, gradually give leadership to learners as the group develops. You do this by stating that you want others to speak as they have ideas. Wait for comments and react positively to them, restating them, and asking for other views during, before and after each stage of reading and writing activities. You also suggest they use the strategies during their own daily, silent reading outside of the lessons. This discussion and expectation that they use strategies as they read identifies reading and writing as a process in which the learner is actively involved.

You also talk about the strategies--"This is what skilled readers do; this is what we'll be doing"--as you go through your lessons. The awareness and use of thinking strategies help new readers become self-directed learners.

**Before Reading** (Setting the Context)

*Strategies skilled readers use*. They:

1. look and think about the title, topics, and illustrations. Ask themselves what the title and illustrations suggest, what kind of clues they give about the story. This brings to mind what is known about the topic. Predict what they expect to get out of the reading such as: information, directions, enjoyment. (Thoughtful reading requires using previously acquired knowledge and past experience in order to understand and comprehend fully the message of the text.)

2. look through the selection to check out the kind of writing--essay, story, poetry, technical--which will be read, identifying the length and level of difficulty of the reading so that they know what to expect.

3. identify a purpose for reading--for pleasure, for information, for instruction, for learning content for a test. (The manner in which a person reads a selection--for detail, just for the general idea, for step-by-step directions--depends on the purpose he/she has for reading it.)

*Procedure for introducing these strategies*

1. Discuss and implement the three strategies given above for setting the initial context.

2. Read the whole story to the learners.

3. This modeling will lead to fluency in the learners' reading. Fluency in turn aids comprehension. Remember, reading is getting meaning from the page. Without comprehension, the lessons are boring and self-directed learning will not take place.

**During Any Reading**

*Strategies skilled readers use*. They:

1. figure out the meaning of new words and concepts by using context clues.

2. stop now and then to restate the meaning and predict what's going to happen(not necessarily aloud).

3. re-read to check prediction and to make sure they understand what they are reading.

If a word isn't understood or known, read ahead to the end of the sentence or further to get more information and predict a word. If the word still isn't known, then ask someone or check the meaning in the dictionary and go on.

*Procedure for introducing these strategies*

1. Discuss the strategies. Tell the learners that they can use these strategies during the time you are reading to them and when they are reading on their own.

2. Read the complete chapter (or unit) to your learners, having them follow along silently. Tell your learners that you will read it to them.

3. After reading to the learners, have them read aloud with you. They might be half a beat behind you but that is all right. Keep reading in meaningful units, at a normal rate. Your learners may be a whole beat behind you on the words of which they are not sure. This is called "choral reading" and this difference in rate is to be expected. Do not slow down. Read at a normal rate, running your finger along under the phrases, being careful not to read word-by-word. Since we are not used to reading or talking in chorus, it might take a while to get accustomed to choral reading.

**After Reading**

*Strategies skilled readers use*. They:

1. summarize the main ideas in an organized way.

2. evaluate the ideas and how they were presented.

3. discuss the selection. Were the original predictions about the selection accurate?

*Procedure for introducing these strategies*

Discuss what has been read, eliciting learners' opinions and expanding on the ideas and information just read as a basis for writing an evaluation of the selection or an elaboration of the ideas contained in it.

You will use writing exercises to give the learners a chance to place the words being learned into new contexts, demonstrating comprehension of these words being learned. Each learner should keep a notebook of his/her writing activities.

## B. Direct Instruction for Groups by V.K. Lawson, Ph.D.

(Reprinted from ***Read On! II, Instructor's Guide***, LVA 1988, pp 11-14 )

Many words will be learned indirectly through peripheral learning as the passage and selected sentences are read again and again, but you may choose to teach some words directly.

**How to Teach Sight Words**

Sight words come from and are taught within the context of the sentences in the story or the piece of writing the learners are working on. Introduce direct instruction as learners indicate a need either through asking you, through errors you see on their written work or consistent mistakes made in reading.

Ask the learners which words they are having trouble with that they want to learn. Have them underline on their paper up to 10 words they choose. Point to each target word as you say it. Have the learners repeat and point to each target word after you say it. Ask learners to give you a new sentence for each target word. You can do this either individually or in a group if you're working on a piece of group writing. This is one way to see that all learners share their knowledge with the group, participate in the group, and demonstrate that the sight words are understood. If the word is not understood by one member of the group, it can be learned from listening to the group.

Read the sentences which contain the target words again. Have the learners read the sentences with you the second time through (choral reading). Have the learner write each target word on a word card (one half or one quarter of a 3X5 card, cut ahead of time). If a learner has not written much, this will almost be a "drawing" exercise. Be patient and allow all the time needed. If a learner's handwriting is too large for words to fit on each card, have the learners write the words on a full card or in his/her notebooks. It is important to have each learner writing from the first lesson.

Work with one word at a time. Have the learner match each word with the word as it appears in the story saying the word as it is matched.

Once all the sight words have been read, written on cards, read again, and matched with the context, shuffle the word cards and have the learner read each one out

of context, matching the card with the word in the story. Use the word cards to build phrases. After several lessons, use the accumulated word cards to make more complex sentences and phrases. This is a good paired activity for two learners. Use the word cards in writing and game activities

**How to Teach Word Patterns**

Word patterns also will be taught in the context of the learner's writing and most likely during the rewriting or editing steps of the session. Word cards will be made for each new word learned in the pattern.

Have the learner select a word containing the pattern he or she wants to learn from among the sight words already learned. If there isn't one then this activity will be skipped during this particular lesson. Ask the learner to get his or her word card for the target pattern and read the word card to you.

The first few times you use the pattern word technique, say "I'm going to show you a way to learn new words by changing just the first letter(s) of a word you already know. If this word is 'sat,'(write as you say the word; make sure that each learner can see what you are writing.) what word is made if I change the 's' to 'm'?" (Write the second word under the first lining up the pattern as you ask the question. If there is no response, supply the word and go on.)

Once the idea of supplying the word in pattern or rhyme is established in the first few lessons, you can introduce a pattern in the following way: As you write, say "If this word is 'get,' what is this word_____?" Fill in the second word in the pattern and wait for a response; if none is given, supply it and go on to the third word in the pattern. Example: "If this word is 'make' what is this word? (**fake**), and this word? (**rake**)." Ask for other words in the pattern. You might say "We're going to make a list of all the words you know and will be able to read because you know that the -am in 'am' has the same sound as the -am in 'Sam,' and jam and...." Read quickly through the list on the board or your paper to establish the rhythm of giving answers and to make it easier for the next word in the pattern to be thought of and suggested. Treat this learning and suggesting as a game. Ask each learner in turn to name a word in pattern and to put it in a sentence.

After you have gotten other suggestions and discussed the meaning of any of the obscure words, say "Get your notebooks and write -am (or whatever the pattern is you're working with) at the top of the page. The - means that letters can be put in front of the -am to make a word." Let learners supply rhyming words; have them write them in their notebooks.

Have learners make a word card for each pattern word suggested. This can be done at the end of the lesson or for home practice. For more practice, ask them to write a sentence for each word learned during the session.

write them in their notebooks.

Have learners make a word card for each pattern word suggested. This can be done at the end of the lesson or for home practice. For more practice, ask them to write a sentence for each word learned during the session.

**How toTeach Phonics or Graphophonemes**

Knowledge of consonant sound/symbol relationships (phonics or graphophonemes) is checked during the lesson, but the actual teaching takes place during the rewriting or editing portion of the lesson. Vowels are taught as part of a vowel-consonant pattern or cluster (word pattern), rather than in isolation, because vowel sounds vary greatly according to the surrounding letters.

1. Ask the learner to find a specific word card they have for a sight or patterned word in the lesson which begins with the letters you want to check.
2. Ask the learner to read the word and then to tell you the name of the letter that begins with the word. Then ask for the sound of that letter. If it is correct, say "Good", and go on. If it isn't known, write a list of four words which begin with or end with that sound. Read the list to the learner. Ask what is common to each word -- (The letter and the sound). Ask them which of these words they want as their key to remembering this letter in the beginning of words. Have them look for the letter in a magazine or newspaper.

For additional discussion of direct instruction , see ***TUTOR***, 6th ed. (Colvin and Root, Revised, 1987).

## C. Hints for Memorization by V.K. Lawson, Ph.D.

(Reprinted from ***Read On ! II, Instructor's Guide***, LVA, 1988, pp 15-16 )

When learning to read and write, one can use sight, sound and meaning associations to help one remember/memorize words, concepts and meanings.

Gradually introduce and model the use of these activities and have the learners use whichever one works for them. Their own preferred style of learning will lead them to favor one over the other. Guard against forcing the use of your own preferred learning style over another.

**Sight/Meaning**

1. Have each learner outline in red crayon or pen the shape of a sight word on his/her sight word card.

3. Have learners draw a block, as in (1) above, around the pattern in a list of patterned words. (arm, armament, disarm/nap, sap, sappy)

4. Have individual learners or the group elaborate on a pattern through meaning connected words--happy, happily or medicine, medical.

5. Have learners write a sentence which includes as many of the target words as possible. The more outrageous the sentence appears to the writer, the more likely he/she will remember the appearance and sound of the words.

6. After reading and discussing the ideas in the selection, write a group or individual essay/story/poem about thoughts and feelings evoked by the selection.

7. Another way to enhance memory is to review the word cards, mentally placing the target words into sentences just before going to bed and once a day for ten minutes or so between sessions. Short, quick reviews aid memory more than long periods of review.

**Sound/Meaning**

1. To enhance the learning of words and phrases, play musical pieces by Vivaldi, Mozart, Haydn, or Bach at low volume, while reading the whole story or the complete chapters. You do not discuss the music or the reason for including it other than to say perhaps: "People learn better when they are relaxed yet alert. Twenty-five years of experience has shown that this kind of music helps people learn better." Give this explanation if you are asked. This music is played both during the introduction and final shared reading activities.

2. The learner reads aloud each word on the list of sight words. While looking at the word, he/she thinks of its meaning. The meaning may not be said aloud. This is also a flash card exercise in which the learner goes through the cards as quickly as he/she can. Any word which cannot be remembered by referring to the original story, noting the shape or referring to the private "memory prompter" can be put aside. These words should be reviewed with the learner's usual "reader" (that person in a non-reader's life who usually does his/her reading), the tutor or another group member. Some people will prefer to read aloud from a notebook list of the words, rather than to use flash cards.

3. Tape record the sight words and pattern words; read along with the recording.

4. Put each sight/pattern word in a sentence. Say the sentence aloud.

5. Using the word list, orally make up a story or report.

6. At the end of each selection tutors and learners discuss and evaluate the ideas in the selection and summarize the main idea. These ideas should be extended beyond the personal experience of the learners during the discussion.

## D. Discovery Method for Spelling Patterns/Generalizations by Judy Cheatham, Ph.D.

You could do some direct teaching in spelling or word families. This type of work is really fun when done in the collaborative group situation.

One example of using the discovery method would be to write:

| | |
|---|---|
| cut | ceiling |
| cat | city |
| come | cider |
| can't | citizen |

Read these lists. Ask the to learners read after you. Then ask, "What beginning sound do you hear in the first list?" Keep asking until you hear /k/. Now say, "What beginning sound do you hear in the second list?" Keep asking until you hear /s/. Now ask, "What's the same about all these words?" "What's different?" You are trying to get learners to say that the letter /c/ has two sounds. Then ask, "Figure out what makes one list have the /k/ and the other have the /s/ sound." You are looking for the answer that the e or i signals an /s/ sound; o, a, u signals the /k/.

That's pretty sophisticated stuff! If you taught this (told this) to a group, they would look at you with blank stares, but it's fun and easy if they figure it out for themselves. Phonics or spelling taught this way is definitely not boring--and it's fun to find these patterns.

For some reason, my learners generally need three tries to state the pattern generalization. Let me give the transcript of my learners formulating a rule for the apostrophe used in forming contractions. I wrote the following two lists on the board:

| | |
|---|---|
| is not | isn't |
| could not | couldn't |
| can not | can't |
| he is | he's |

I said to my class, "You are the teacher. The learner wants to know how you form a contraction. Write a rule for him to use."

When it was time to go to the board, the whole group went! They clustered around each other, prodding, giving advice, providing moral support. From almost every group, the rule was, "Two words made into one word by an apostrophe."

So I went to the board, wrote "horse shoe = horse'shoe," and asked, "Is that a contraction?" The response was "No." I asked, "Why not?" "As you go back to your groups," I continued, "figure out what the difference is between 'is not = isn't'

and 'horse shoe' = horseshoe.' Look at the lists on the board again and let's take another shot at a rule."

Groups went to the board two more times before their rule fit the examples. Of course, many of you will identify the pedagogy used here as inquiry, which is as old as Socrates, or deductive reasoning, which we trace to Sir Francis Bacon. There is nothing new about this type of teaching.

You have excellent resources available to you for developing your own ideas and for supplementing your instruction from LVA: ***Tutor***, Colvin and Root (1987); ***Instructor's Guide Read On! II***, Lawson (1988); and the workbooks in the ***Read On! II*** series. It would be redundant here to repeat all the exercises available in those books. Use them as supplements when a learner needs those kinds of activities. In your diagnosis of a particular learner's writing or reading, you can prescribe certain pages that only apply to him. If you find there are two who need the same work, they can work in pairs in a workshop part of the session. The point is, if only one learner needs help with capitals, for example, don't make the whole class spend two hours on capitalization.

Any time you work with process activities, you must remember that your goal is for the learner to internalize the generalizations governing the written English language. For that reason, don't tell them; have them tell you. If the group decides a period goes after a group of words, ask why. If the group decides the a word begins with a capital letter, ask why. Accept nothing without trying to get learners to work through and discuss their thought processes and strategies.

**Appendix IV.**

# Silent Reading

**Ruth J. Colvin**

(Reprinted from ***Tutoring Small Groups***, LVA 1985, page 21, op)

It is often suggested that adult reading learners be given material that is below their reading level. This has many advantages, including the confidence it gives new readers and the ability to read right along without stumbling, allowing for comprehension not just "word calling." This is a good practice and should be continued. However, there are times when we want to challenge new readers, to encourage them to push ahead, to let them know that they are capable of reading and understanding more than they think they can.

I was leaving on an extended trip and was trying to prepare the members of my small group for more independent work. Two of the learners. Donnie and Janice, read at perhaps the fourth grade level. I looked for material at the fifth or sixth grade reading level. It could have been even more difficult, but the subject matter had to be interesting and sufficiently tantalizing for them to want to read on. I got Reader's Digest's version of ***Jonathan Livingston Seagull*** and gave each of them a copy. They looked at it and immediately said that it looked too difficult.

I suggested that they read the first two pages silently. Afterwards, I'd asked them to tell us what they'd read. Almost immediately, Donnie asked me what one word was--he couldn't sound it out, he didn't know it by sight and it didn't look like any pattern he'd had. I asked him just to skip it, read along and I thought he'd get the idea.

Shortly, Janice asked what one word was. I gave her an answer similar to the one I had given Donnie. After several attempts to get the words from me, they shrugged their shoulders and continued reading.

When they both looked up, finished, I asked then what they had read. Speaking sometimes together, sometimes alternately, they told me what the story was about. That's when I explained--even though they couldn't read every word, they got the idea--they "skimmed" and understood.

This was a revelation to them. We talked about it. It had proved to them that they could read more than they thought they could.

We continued--I read part of the story aloud to them (I wanted to be sure they saw reading for enjoyment too)--and they read part silently. We stopped at a crucial point in the story. I left the books with them and they knew they were

free now to read or not to read the rest of ***Jonathan Livingston Seagull***.

We, as tutors, must know when to give reading material below a reader's level and when to challenge them with material beyond their level.

Charles, a third member of my small group, read at the first grade level. We're still working to build up his self confidence. An experience like the ***Jonathan Livingston Seagull*** silent reading activity would have been disastrous to him.

I suggest that silent reading of material which challenges learners to stretch (being sure that the material is of high interest) is another element of reading that we shouldn't overlook.

Encourage learners to select books for silent reading when they have finished their editing during the session, when they arrive early or after class. Have a variety of books available. When you teach the strategies (pp 52-53) for evaluating a book, point out that this is how they select their own reading material.

**Appendix V.**

# Topically Focused Groups

## Basis

A proven successful way of getting people to participte in collaborative small groups is to focus the group's work on a specific topic. How you choose to originate groups will depend on your program's size and managerial style.

Learners can be involved in the selection of topics if tutors/program planners analyze the reasons learners give for wanting to learn to read and write and then offer groups focused around such topics. The learners who want to study a specific topic would sign up much the way anyone would for any continuing education course. Learners, either new to the program or new to the idea of small group tutoring, may need extra encouragement to express their interests and to join a group, but programs which offer the groups report a high level of participation and retention.

A second source of learner-selected topics are those special requests which learners might make once the focus group option has been in operation for a while (as is the case in the LVA-New York City program).

Yet another way to elicit topics is to begin with a group which was organized "to learn to read and write" and have the group come up with a common topic based on their expressed desires in learning to read. Examples of such topics developed by groups are job skills, reading with children, nutrition, the question of nuclear war, parenting, better housing, book discussion or useful crafts.

Once the topic has been selected, groups are then scheduled to meet on that particular topic for a limited time period such as four to eight or ten weeks. Of course, groups can continue as long as there is interest within the group to stay together. At the end of the specific time period, the group members may decide to go to a new topic or stay with the original one.

No matter how the topic is arrived at, the following list of **Resources** is intended to be a starting point for the tutor and program planners to select materials for the group to use and adapt to suit its situation.

## Resources

### For Information Discussions

***Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.***, 200 State Road, South Deerfield, MA 01373. 1-800-628-7733. Publishers of Scriptographic Booklets, which are quality, eight to 16 page booklets on over 100 topics ranging from mental health to nutrition to baby care and on the job safety. For books at a cost which will enable you to supply each member of the group with a copy, then call the toll free number above for a catalog and sample booklets.

***Mercer Publishing Corporation***, Suite 203jA, 25 Bedford Ave, Norwalk, CT 06850. Their ***"Getting Yourself a Job"*** series is an expanded collection of their original ***"Job Scene"*** series. These eight page, comic-book paper and four-color printings are inexpensive resource materials for older teens and young adults. They provide general details about specific jobs, e.g. "What does a _____ do? Where do you find the jobs? Who do you contact? etc."

***Trillium Press***, PO Box 209 R, Monroe, NY 11050. Phone, 914-783-2999. The Teacher's Manuals to the ***Reading, Writing, Thinking for Life*** series by Jane L. Davidson, Nancy D. Padak, and Gary M. Padak can provide tutors with help in forming questions for the inquiry ("ask, don't tell") approach advocated by LVA in collaborative tutoring. There is a guide for each of eight topics: Getting Along with Others; Mothers, Fathers, Daughters, Sons; Helping Your Children Learn; Getting the Most for Your Money; Getting and Changing Jobs; and Making Life Better for Yourself. The books are designed to be used as the basis for sessions with adult basic reading and writing learners. Write or call the company for an information brochure on this series.

## For Book Discussion

The handbook ***"Book Discussion Clubs"*** was developed by Project Learn, Cleveland, OH, and is available from Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., 5795 Widewaters Parkway, Syracuse, NY 13214. Phone 315-445-8000, FAX 315-445-8006. The handbook gives step-by-step direction for facilitating a literary club of adult new readers. Readers learn to evaluate books and authors on the basis of plot and character development. Encourages new readers to see themselves not as people learning to read but as people who do read.

For novels or other pleasure reading for adult new readers send for catalogs from the following publishers:

**Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.**, 5795 Widewaters Parkway, Syracuse, NY 13214. 315-445-8000, 315-445-8006 (FAX)

**New Readers Press**, Dept. 5, 1320 Jamesville Avenue, Box 131, Syracuse, NY 13210. 1-800-448-8878 (In NY State, 1- 800-624-6703 ).

**Prentice Hall Regents**, Attention: College Division, Route 9W, Englewood CLiffs, NJ 07632, 1-800-526-0485.

**Steck-Vaughn,Co.**, PO Box 26015, Austin, TX 78755, 1-800-531-5015.

## For Issues Discussion

Two national educational groups, National Issues Forum and Great Books, are extending their programs to adult literacy audiences. Both of these programs have materials for learners, study guides for the tutor and training for tutors and program managers on how to use the materials for discussion and writing.

*National Issues Forum*, contact Virginia Paget, Program Officer, Kettering Foundation, 200 Commons Road, Dayton, OH, 1-800-221-3657.

*Great Books* (Junior Great Books), Mary Ann Pankiewicz, The Great Books Foundation, 40 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. 1-800-222-5870. In Illinois, 312-332-5870.

## Other Literacy Volunteers of America Resources

***Reading With Children-*** Offers practical how-to's for use of assisted reading, recorded books, puppets, writing and other supports for story telling.

***Occupational Literacy Process Sheets-*** Guidelines for designing an individualized curriculum in any workplace. Focuses on bringing success to learners in any occupation.

***Read On! II.*** LVA's adult reading series with six books, workbooks and audio tapes. Especially useful for the inexperienced tutor. Includes an instructor's guide and free placement test.

**Appendix VI.**

# Forms

(May be reproduced for program use)

- Group Lesson Plan
- LVA Learner Intake/Permanent Record
- LVA Learner Update Report
- Examples of Learner Goals

# Group Lesson Plan

Date_____

**Topic (Goal):**

**Task:**

**Reading Selections:**

**Materials Needed:**

**Direct Instruction (as needed):**
**-Group:**

**-Individual:**

| | Learner 1 | Learner 2 | Learner 3 | Learner 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic Writing On:** | | | | |
| **Problems?** | | | | |
| **Activities:** | | | | |
| **Homework Assignment:** | | | | |
| **General Comments:** | | | | |

**Other Notes/Comments/Evaluation:**

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Form 1

# LVA *Learner* Intake/Permanent Record

*Local office use only. Please use blue or black ink.*

**Date:** ___ ___ (mo.) ___ ___ (day) ___ ___ (yr.)

**Interviewed by:** _____

**Type of Program:** __Regular __Teen __Aging __Corrections __In-School __Migrant __Other _____

**Program:** *(Circle one)* **BR/ESL**

**Instruction:** OTO/SmGp/ClassRm

**Tutor Assigned:**

**Status:** __Active __Transfer/Return __No Test __Terminated __No Match

**Type of Institution:** __Library __School __Correctional __Other

## Learner Information:

**Name:** _____

Address: _____

Phone (H): (  )_____- _____ Okay to Call? Y/N Okay to Mail? Y/N

Phone (W):(  )_____- _____ (ext.  ) OK to Call? Y/N

Date of Birth: ___ ___ (mo.) ___ ___ (day) ___ ___ (yr.)

M/F

Place of Birth: _____

U.S. Citizen: Y/N Years in U.S.____

Marital Status: *(Circle one)* M/S/D/W

**Ethnic Group:**
__ 0 Native American
__ 1 Asian
__ 2 Black
__ 3 White
__ 4 Hispanic
__ 5 Not Available

**Native Language:**_____
Speak/Read/Write

**Education:**
__ 0 Gr. 0-4
__ 1 Gr. 5-8
__ 2 Gr. 9-11
__ 3 H.S. Diploma
__ 4 Some College
__ 5 Not Available

**Parent:** Y/N
**No. of Dependents:** ____

**Employment Status:**
__ 0 Full-time
__ 1 Part-time
__ 2 Unemployed
__ 3 Disabled
__ 4 Retired
__ 5 Not in Labor Market
__ 6 Seeking Work
__ 7 Info Not Available

**Occupation:**
__ 0 Professional
__ 1 Managerial
__ 2 Clerical
__ 3 Technical
__ 4 Service
__ 5 Agriculture
__ 6 Homemaker
__ 7 Sales
__ 8 Inmate
__ 9 Other _____

**Income:**
__ 0 (< 5,000)
__ 1 (5-9,999)
__ 2 (10-14,999)
__ 3 (15-19,000)
__ 4 (20-24,999)
__ 5 Not Available
__ 6 On Public Assistance

**Source of Referral:**
__ 0 TV
__ 1 Radio
__ 2 Friend/Family
__ 3 Employer
__ 4 Library
__ 5 Other Agency
__ 6 Other Lit. Org.
__ 7 Poster
__ 8 Literacy Hotline
__ 9 Other _____

**Entry Goals:(Check, then list actual- see expanded list)**
__ 0 Community -
__ 1 Driver's License-
__ 2 Begin GED-
__ 3 Job/Better Job-
__ 4 Survival Skills-
__ 5 Parenting Skills-
__ 6 Voting-
__ 7 Enter other Ed./Training-
__ 8 Library/Creative-
__ 9 Get off Public Assistance-
__ 10 Other _____

Why did Learner come to this program?

**Told of Programs Offered?** Y/N

**Instuctor Preference:** M/F

**Location Preference:**

**Available to Meet:**
Mon M/A/E_____
Tues M/A/E_____
Wed M/A/E_____
Thurs M/A/E_____
Fri M/A/E_____
Sat M/A/E_____
Sun M/A/E_____

**Transportation Mode:**

**Initial READ/ESLOA Test Date:**
**Initial READ/ESLOA Test Level:**

**Special Needs:**
__Hearing Impaired
__Physically Disabled
__Wheelchair
__Teen
__Irreg Meeting Times
__ Other _____

Referred to another Agency: Y/N Where

(OVER)

# LVA *Learner* Intake/Permanent Record (continued)

## History

**Hours Tutored:**

Year To Date: _____
Life To Date: _____

**(Check, enter date , then list specific achievement- see expanded list)**

**Goals Achieved:**

__ 0 Community-
__ 1 Driver's License-
__ 2 Begin GED-
__ 3 Job/Better Job-
__ 4 Survival Skills-
__ 5 Parenting Skills-
__ 6 Voting-
__ 7 Enter other Ed./Training-
__ 8 Library/Creative-
__ 9 Get off Public Assistance-
__ 10 Other _____

**New Goals Set:**

__ 0 Community-
__ 1 Driver's License-
__ 2 Begin GED-
__ 3 Job/Better Job-
__ 4 Survival Skills-
__ 5 Parenting Skills-
__ 6 Voting-
__ 7 Enter other Ed./Training-
__ 8 Library/Creative-
__ 9 Get off Public Assistance-
__ 10 Other _____

**READ TEST/ESLOA** *(every 50 Hours):*

Re-Test Date:

Re-Test Date:

Re-Test Date:

Re-Test Date:

Re-Test Date:

**Termination Date:** [ ] [ ] [ ] *mo. day yr.*

**Termination Reason:**

__0 Met Goals
__ 1 Health Pregnancy
__2 Childcare Problems
__ 3 TransportationProbs
__4 Tutoring Location
__ 5 Lack of Interest
__ 6 Moved/Left Area
__ 7 Personal
__ 8 Tutor Termination
__ 9 Unknown
__10 Tut/Lnr Sched Conf
__ 11 Other _____

**READ/ESLOA Test Level at Termination:**_____

**Additional Comments:**

1. What overall progress has Learner made? __ Fluency in reading, writing, speaking __ Follows directions easier __ Other :

2. Changes in Self- Esteem noted? __Takes on challenging projects __ Attempts things not willing to be tried before __ More willing to read aloud and share __ More eye contact __ Other :

3. What materials are being used? __ Books __ Reading Series __ Real Life Materials (newspaper, forms, handbooks, job manuals, menus, etc.) __ Other:

4. What writing has been done? __ Journal __ Essays __ Stories __ Notes __ Other:

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Form 2

# LVA Learner Update Report

_Quarterly _Semi-Annually _Monthly

Date: ___ ___ ___ (mo. day yr.)

*For Local Use. Please use blue or black ink.*

**Learner Name:**_____ **Learner ID #**_____ **Tutor:**_____

**Program:** *(Circle one)* **BR/ESL** **Current Instruction**: OTO/SmGp/ClassRm

**Hours Tutored:**
Current Quarter:___
Year To Date: _____

**Hours Tutor Prep**
Current Quarter:___
Year To Date: _____

**READ /ESLOA Test Level**
Last Test Level : ___
Date:
ReTest this Quarter___
Date:

**(Check, then list actual- see expanded list)**
**Goals Achieved:**
__ 0 Community-
__ 1 Driver's License-
__ 2 Begin GED-
__ 3 Job/Better Job-
__ 4 Survival Skills-
__ 5 Parenting Skills-
__ 6 Voting-
__ 7 Enter other Ed./Training-
__ 8 Library/Creative-
__ 9 Get off Public Assistance-
__ 10 Other _____

**New Goals Set:**
__ 0 Community-
__ 1 Driver's License-
__ 2 Begin GED-
__ 3 Job/Better Job-
__ 4 Survival Skills-
__ 5 Parenting Skills-
__ 6 Voting-
__ 7 Enter other Ed./Training-
__ 8 Library/Creative-
__ 9 Get off Public Assistance-
__ 10 Other _____

## *Changes* in Learner Information:

**Parent:** Y/N
**No. of Dependents:** ____

**Address :** _____
**Phone (H):** (  )_____- _____ Okay to Call? Y/N
**Phone (W):**(  )_____- _____ (ext.  ) OK to Call? Y/N
**Marital Status:** *(Circle one)* M/S/D/W

**Education:**
__ 0 Gr. 0-4
__ 1 Gr. 5-8
__ 2 Gr. 9-11
__ 3 H.S. Diploma
__ 4 Some College
__ 5 Not Available

**Employment Status:**
__ 0 Full-time
__ 1 Part-time
__ 2 Unemployed
__ 3 Disabled
__ 4 Retired
__ 5 Not in Labor Market
__ 6 Seeking Work
__ 7 Info Not Available

**Occupation:**
__ 0 Professional
__ 1 Managerial
__ 2 Clerical
__ 3 Technical
__ 4 Service
__ 5 Agriculture
__ 6 Homemaker
__ 7 Sales
__ 8 Inmate
__ 9 Other _____

**Income:**
__ 0 (< 5,000)
__ 1 (5-15,999)
__ 2 (16-25,999)
__ 3 (26-40,999)
__ 4 (>41,000)
__ 5 Not Available
__ 6 On Public Assistance

**Available to Meet:**
Mon M/A/E_____
Tues M/A/E_____
Wed. M/A/E_____
Thurs M/A/E_____
Fri M/A/E_____
Sat M/A/E_____
Sun M/A/E_____

**Transportation Mode:**

**Location Preference:**

Read/ESLOA Test level at Termination:___

**Termination Date:** ___ ___ ___ (mo. day yr.)

**Termination Reason:**
__0 Met Goals __1 Health Pregnancy
__2 Childcare Problems __3 Transportation Probs
__4 Tutoring Location __ 5 Lack of Interest
__ 6 Moved/Left Area __ 7 Personal
__ 8 Tutor Termination __ Unknown
__10 Tut/Lnr Sched Conf __ 11 Other _____

Participation in Learner- Program Activities:
__Recruitment __Media
__ Speaking __Newsletter
__Support Group __ Talk to New Learners
__Other

(OVER)

# LVA Learner Update Report (Continued)

## Learner's Comments

1. What has Learner liked about sessions? __ Reading __ Discussion __ Other group members __ Writing __SharingWriting __ Topics chosen __ Other:

2. What would Learner like changed about sessions? __Topics covered __Meeting time __ Meeting place __Materials read __ Other:

3. What materials would Learner like to use? __ Books __ Reading series __ Newspapers __ Forms __ Handbooks __ Job Manuals __ Menus __ Other:

4.What would Learner like to write about? __Life experience __Fiction Story __Hobby __ People __ Vacation __Other:

## Tutor's Observations

1. What overall progress has Learner made? __Fluency in reading, writing, speaking __ Follows directions easier ___Other:

2. Is homework kept up with? Y/N

3. Changes in self-esteem noted? __More at ease in Group __ Takes on challenging projects __Attempts things not willing to be tried before __ More willing to read aloud and share with group __ Other:

4. Where do you need to focus on next quarter?

5. What materials are being used? __Books __Reading series __Real Life materials (newspaper, forms, handbooks, job manuals, menus, etc.) __Other:

5a. What reading is planned for next three months? (Please List as in #5)

6. What Writing has been done? __Journal __Essays __Stories __Notes __ Other:

6a. What writing is being planned?(Please list as is #6)

# Examples of Learner Goals

**Community (00)**
- -Apply for Citizenship
- -Reading for ReligiousActivities (Bible, Talmud,etc.)
- -Reading for Community Activites
- -Participate in Neighborhood Watch
- -Read Newsletter

**Driver's License (01)**
- -Apply for Driver's License
- -Take Driver's Test

**Began GED (02)**
- -Register for GED classes

**Job/Better Job (03)**
- -Read Classified Ads
- -Apply for Armed Services
- -Read Notes from Co-Workers
- -Read Work Related Materials
- -Read Manuals
- -Read Equipment Operating Instructions
- -Fill Out Application
- -Take Test for a Job
- -Write Notes to Co-Workers
- -Write Reports
- -Fill Out Orders/Requisitions

**Survival Skills (04)**
- -Read Menus
- -Write Shopping Lists
- -Read Newspapers/Magazines
- -Write Checks
- -Open/Use Checking/Savings Accts.
- -Apply for Unemployment Insurance
- -Read Lease/Rental Agreement
- -Read Labels in Drug Store
- -Fill Out Insurance Forms
- -Read Travel Guides/Maps
- -Find Number/Address/Info in Phone Book/Yellow Pages
- -Read Recipes
- -Read Cooking Directions/Food Labels
- -Read Bills
- -Balance Checkbook to Statement
- -Apply for Safety Deposit Box
- -Complete Credit/Loan Application
- -Read Medication Labels/Prescriptions
- -Apply for Medicare/Medicaid/HMO
- -Read Bus/Airline/Train Schedules
- -Read Car Repair Invoices

**Parenting/Family (05)**
- -Read Notes from School
- -Read to Child
- -Read/Write Cards/Letters
- -Participate in Scouting Program
- -Write Notes to School
- -Help Child with Homework
- -Participate in PTA

**Voting (06)**
- -Register to Vote
- -Read Ballot and Vote

**Entered Other Educational Training (07)**
- -Entered Training Program
- -Enter Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program
- -Take Adult Basic Education (ABE) Classes
- -Apply for College

**Library Card (08)**
- -Apply for Library Card
- -Check Out Books
- -Use Reference Materials
- -Read in Library
- -Check Out A/V Materials

# Suggested Reading

## Available from Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc.

***Book Discussion Clubs- for Adult New Reader***. Nancy Oakley (ed.). 1988, developed by Project LEARN, Cleveland, OH. (LVA Order # 91015)

***Joining the Literacy Club: Further Essays into Education.*** Frank Smith, 1988, Heinemann Educational Books (LVA Order # 50002).

***Occupational Literacy: Process Sheets***. V.K. Lawson, 1989, Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA Order # 91017).

***Participatory Literacy Education***. Arlene Fingeret, Paul Jurmo (editors), 1989, New Directions for Continuing Education, Volume Number 42, Jossy-Bass (LVA Order #01024).

***Read On! II Instructor's Guide***. V.K. Lawson, 1987, Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA Order # 81220).

***Reading With Children***. Lester Laminack, 1989, Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. (LVA Order Number # 49001).

***Reading Without Nonsense***. Frank Smith, 1984, Teacher's College Press, Columbia University (LVA Order # 50001).

***Tutor***. Ruth J. Colvin, Jane Root, 1987, Literacy Volunteers of America Inc. (LVA Order # 91087).

***What's Whole in Whole Language***. Ken Goodman, 1986, Heinemann Educational Books (LVA Order # 91020).

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## NOTES

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